

mujer y desarrollo

The Gender Perspective in Economic and Labour Policies

State of the Art in Latin America and
the Caribbean

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Women and Development Unit

ECLAC-GTZ project “Institutionalization of gender
policies within ECLAC and sectoral ministries”

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Abstract

The member countries of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) have called for an integrated approach to development. Despite making significant macroeconomic progress in the 1990s, the Latin American economies reached the end of the decade with relative poverty levels above those of 1980, while labour market conditions have worsened in most countries.

To achieve development with equity, it is essential to apply a gender perspective to public-policy formation, as a technical-analytical instrument to accompany the overall ethical-political goal. For the United Nations, and hence for ECLAC, gender mainstreaming is the process of examining the implications for women and men of all types of planned public actions, including legislation, policies and programmes in any area. “It is also a tool for turning men’s and women’s interests and needs into an integrated dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, social and economic domains” (United Nations, 1997).

The purpose of this diagnostic study is to describe how and to what extent the region’s governments have built this concern for gender equity into economic and especially labour market policies. The study is expected to help implement agreements and resolutions arising from regional conferences (Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001; and the Santiago and Lima Consensuses) and global agreements (the Beijing Platform for Action; the commitments of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations), with regard to institutionalizing the gender perspective and women’s rights in public policies.

This is a pioneering study focusing on a number of formal aspects that have been identified as potential indicators of the extent of gender mainstreaming in economic and labour policies and programmes. These include commitments assumed; institutional mechanisms adopted; new legal provisions; programmes implemented; and technical and financial resources made available. The indicators analysed here reflect the results achieved on gender mainstreaming in the region's countries during the 1990s, but do not consider the processes that have led to their achievement. The latter have either been addressed in other studies¹ or are still awaiting analysis.

The results of this analysis have been made available to governments and other interested parties, as a contribution to implementing and enhancing what are increasingly effective mechanisms and strategies for achieving the goal of gender mainstreaming in all public policies and interventions — and hence, development with social and gender equity.

¹ See Guzman (2000).

I. Introduction

According to the report “Equity, Development and Citizenship”, which ECLAC presented at its twenty-eighth session in Mexico City (3-7 April 2000), the Latin American economies made significant progress in macroeconomic terms during the 1990s: a revival of growth, with gross domestic product (GDP) expanding by 3.3% per year between 1990 and 2000; the lowest inflation rates recorded in the last half-century; a fiscal deficit reduced to between 1% and 2% of GDP on average in most of the region’s countries; modernization of leading sectors of the economy; and an acceleration of export growth. In contrast to this, results in terms of productivity and equity have been disappointing: production chains have been seriously disrupted; labour-market conditions have deteriorated in most countries; and the decade is set to end with relative poverty levels above those of 1980.

Against this backdrop, ECLAC proposes that attention be turned away from macroeconomics toward a more integrated view of development emphasizing equity and citizenship.

“This means redirecting efforts in the region, applying pragmatic policies suited to particular domestic needs; *strengthening equity as the “main yardstick” for measuring the quality of development in the future*; and generating a development process founded on real macroeconomic stability. This, in turn, will permit sustainable development on the continent, and make it possible to interweave these efforts with others aimed at making citizens an active and decisive force in their own economic development” (ECLAC, 2000c).

Development with equity is achieved when countries succeed in increasing and making the most of their capacities and resources (including human, technical and natural resources), in pursuit of individual and social well-being.

A development model is equitable and, hence, efficient, if it satisfies people's various human needs (economic, social, cultural, health) under conditions of equal opportunity and treatment. In order to design public policies that promote development with equity, it is essential to apply a *gender perspective, as an analytical instrument* accompanying the overall ethical goal (social/gender equity), in order to fully recognize both women's and men's contributions to development, along with their corresponding benefits and needs. Application of a gender perspective — as a technical-analytical instrument — in analysis and planning processes is a necessary condition for achieving an integrative development model that empowers citizens and promotes social and economic integration in societies that are both democratic and productive.

During the past decade, there has been increasing concern in the countries of the region to view the gender dimension as an integral part of the goal of social equity, not only in the social domain but also in labour and economic policies. Labour Ministries have increasingly adopted specific policies or programmes for promoting equal opportunities between women and men. Several have set up women's units inside the ministry, or have established cooperation agreements with national mechanisms for the advancement of women. Women's committees or departments have been set up in labour union federations, while more and more business associations and organizations with commissions of this type are adopting equal opportunity policies. At the same time, social organizations, academic institutions and other social actors are drawing attention to the discriminations and exclusions that women continue to suffer in the labour and economic domains, lobbying for this situation to be reversed and proposing concrete measures to this end.

Against this backdrop, national mechanisms established in the region's countries to promote public policies that generate increasingly equitable opportunities and benefits for women and men, are also increasingly turning their attention to labour- market and economic issues. In the Lima Consensus, countries participating in the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Lima in February 2000, made commitments including:

- Redirect public policies, placing social and gender equity at the centre of governmental concerns, and achieving this by systematically basing policies on assessments of their differential impact on men and women, and monitoring their implementation;
- Promote socioeconomic policies that foster growth and sustainable development with equity and equality, in order to combat the intergenerational transmission of poverty by allocating, redistributing and increasing resources;
- Take positive steps to overcome any negative effects of globalization and trade liberalization, and to ensure equal and fair access to their benefits and opportunities;
- Develop strategies for creating more and better jobs for women, along with equitable systems of social protection;
- Promote a recognition of the social and economic contribution of unpaid work done by women, predominantly in the home, and urge governments to provide them with social security coverage;

The concern to "institutionalize" the gender perspective comes at a time of widespread calls for productive systems, public institutions and social organizations to be made less costly, bureaucratic and complex, yet also more democratic and effective in fulfilling their mandates in pursuit of the general well-being of the population as a whole, men and women alike. Arguments in favour of social justice and respect for human rights in a comprehensive development framework are strengthened by efficiency and productivity arguments. Efficiency arguments make clear that productive systems increasingly depend on the female labour force, with some sectors now relying predominantly on female waged employment. There is also a growing awareness that our entire economic system ultimately relies on unpaid work in a number of care services which, although economically undervalued, have a high aggregate social value.

At the same time, it is now accepted that efficient development is development with equity, and that the inefficiency of the current system can be seen, among other things, in the phenomenon of “jobless growth”, which leads to the crisis of full and formal employment as the “gateway” to the benefits of development. In addition, traditional community living structures have undergone profound change, with increasing numbers of households now depending for their survival on female wage-earning employment; so economic and labour-market systems based on the traditional paradigm of the male economic provider, have become increasingly less efficient.

Everything seems to indicate that we are transitioning toward new models of economic and societal organization that are currently under construction, seeking new modes of producing, working and living that are more viable and desirable in this highly technological, globalized, heterogeneous and changing world. In this context, the demands being made on public institutions are reflected in the attention given to the issue of State restructuring and modernization in Latin America. From a gender perspective, the question is therefore how to ensure that systems, structures and institutions provide full *de facto* and not just *de jure* justice to women; how can they more effectively promote gender equity in their daily activities, leading to more equitable policies and programmes that are also efficient in economic, social and gender terms?

The main question underlying this diagnostic study is how and to what extent national mechanisms for the advancement of women — and related sectoral ministries in the labour and economic domains — have addressed the issue of gender equity in economic and labour-market policies during the 1990s. There is no simple answer. The intensity of the process varies greatly from country to country, depending on a number of institutional and contextual factors. The former include the wide heterogeneity of national mechanisms for the advancement of women. These have been created at different times and in different historical and political settings; they have different operating modalities and levels of institutionality, and they do not all have the same human and financial resources. In addition, these mechanisms operate in countries that vary in terms of economic and productive systems; their levels and modalities of integration with the international market; the structure of their labour markets; their social policies; and their forms of social and civil organization.

These factors and others affect the degree and mode of attention that countries pay to the social-equity agenda as a whole, and gender equity in particular, in their labour and economic policies. Not all social actors, nor all national mechanisms for the advancement of women, share the same vision and understanding of the concepts, objectives, theories and strategies summarized under broad terms such as: gender issues, gender equity, and advancement of women. On the contrary, labels such as “gender” or “women” can encompass goals, demands, justifications, strategies and actions that are both different and divergent.

Analysis of the extent to which concern for gender equity has been mainstreamed in public policies in a given country needs to take account of all these factors, in order to adequately “contextualise” ongoing processes and initiatives, and so thoroughly assess where and to what extent one can speak of true progress. It is clearly impossible to make a comparative diagnostic study on this scale for the region as a whole, so we have opted in this analysis to provide a regionwide overview of the processes and mechanisms adopted. Clearly any analysis that addresses policies and mechanisms exclusively in terms of public institutionality will have shortcomings, given that the relations between State structure, civil society and market are currently being drastically redefined in Latin America.

There is a general crisis of legitimacy surrounding the State as the main agent in the modernization process, and increasingly strong pressure to downsize the State apparatus. This obviously affects the capacity of State institutions to direct and influence the economic and labour agenda; and other social and economic actors seem to be playing an increasingly important role in defining agendas, priorities and strategies. Nonetheless, at the same time there is broad consensus that this transformation of the State should not mean its gradual elimination.

There is increasing awareness that the “invisible hand” of free and unfettered markets is incapable of attaining the necessary equilibria between supply and demand, minimum needs and satisfactions,

partly because not all actors (ranging from individuals to social, economic or geographic groupings) are in equal conditions or positions in terms of opportunities, resources and power. Efficient markets therefore require the presence and guidance of “a visible hand” provided by democratic and transparent public authority, to make sure development is comprehensive and equitable, and thus viable.

II. State of the art

To analyse the extent and mode of gender mainstreaming in economic and labour-market policies and programmes, one needs to focus on institutional components in which processes can be identified that lead to a greater emphasis being placed on gender issues. This study analyses available information on (1) national objectives and commitments; (2) sectoral and intersectoral mechanisms at governmental level aimed at promoting gender equity; (3) gender-equity-related programmes and projects in the economic and labour-market domains; (4) legal provisions aimed at ensuring equal opportunities between women and men in the economic and labour spheres; (5) availability and analysis of information making it possible to formulate public policies with a gender perspective; (6) initiatives for strengthening institutional capacity to implement public policies with a gender perspective; and lastly (7) outstanding issues in the process of gender mainstreaming in State activities. All of these indicators are outlined, along with the methodology and process of data collection, in Annex B to this document (p. 73).

A. Objectives and commitments

An element that is broadly accepted as essential for analysing any institution is its “mission” and the goals set for it.

Accordingly, an analysis is made of the extent to which States recognise the need for gender mainstreaming in all spheres of public policy, and the strategies and mechanisms for the advancement of women that have been adopted for this purpose. We also review the extent to which goals have been set for achieving gender equity in the economic and labour-market domains.

1. National equality plans

Over the last decade, nearly all countries in the region have drawn up national plans for equal opportunities and treatment between men and women (see table 1). The preparation of these national plans was given a major boost by recommendations adopted at the World Conferences on Women, specifically those of Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995).

Table 1
**NATIONAL AND SECTORAL EQUALITY PLANS
IN THE ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET DOMAINS (1990s)**

	National plan	Sectoral plan	
	Equal opportunities and treatment between women and men	Equality at work	Equality in rural development
Antigua and Barbuda	•
Argentina	•	•	...
Bahamas	•
Barbados	•
Belize	•
Bolivia	•	•	...
Brazil	•
Chile	•	...	•
Colombia	•
Costa Rica	•	•	•
Cuba	•	•	•
Dominica	•
Ecuador	•
El Salvador	•	...	•
Grenada
Guatemala	•
Guyana	•
Haiti	•
Honduras	•
Jamaica	•
Mexico	•	•	...
Nicaragua	•
Panama	•
Paraguay	•	•	...
Peru	•	•	...
Dominican Republic	•
Saint Kitts and Nevis	•
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	•
Saint Lucia	•
Suriname	•
Trinidad and Tobago	•
Uruguay	×	×	×
Venezuela	•

Sources: ECLAC, on the basis of published information and that provided by governments in the 1999 and 2000 survey; *The Challenge of Gender Equity and Human Rights on the Threshold of the Twenty-first Century*, Mujer y desarrollo series, No. 27 (LC/L.1295/Rev.1-P), Santiago, Chile, May 2000. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.II.G.48, pp.17-19.

... Data unavailable × No plan in existence

The effect that such a national plan can have on the institutionalisation of the gender perspective in public policies depends on a number of factors. These include the degree of participation and sociopolitical consensus achieved in the process of preparing the national plan,² and the extent of citizen organisation and awareness that may be required if gender equity policies are to be adopted and successfully implemented.

² In several countries of the region, women's NGOs and their experts have played a leading role in designing the national plans. Many plans have the "peculiarity of being the outcome of quite structured processes of consultation with civil society, which clearly distinguishes them from other social policy mechanisms" (ECLAC, 2000b, p. 20).

Most national mechanisms for the advancement of women have been created since the 1980s, and the fact that they are playing a key role in this process speaks for itself. A government institution is needed with a strategic vision and the technical and political capacities to extract maximum commitment from the highest levels of executive power and all governmental institutions to ensure “institutional” implementation of the established objectives.³

Below we analyse the way in which national plans address the challenge of mainstreaming gender in public policies, and the extent to which they advocate for gender equity concerns to be built into economic policy-making.

(i) Gender mainstreaming

Since taking the strategic decision to incorporate the gender perspective in all State activities, national plans have been the reference framework and the programme guiding the various actors and State agencies in action priorities within their specialty fields to promote equity between women and men. Ideally, the national mechanism should concentrate on promoting, coordinating, advising and monitoring the execution of national and sectoral policies to promote gender equity, and, in some cases, take responsibility for putting specific programmes and projects into operation.

Generally speaking, the information provided by governments suggests that the vast majority of women’s bureaux in the region have subscribed to the gender mainstreaming strategy and the corresponding institutional strengthening in all State institutions and domains, as one of their key tasks. Although the objectives and functions of national mechanisms in some cases do not refer explicitly to gender mainstreaming, they do demonstrate an acceptance of it by taking on functions of promotion, advice and intersectoral coordination aimed in this direction.⁴

Despite this encouraging trend, national action plans in some of the region’s countries still tend to be merely work programmes of the *national mechanisms for the advancement of women* rather than a commitment involving the whole State. In such cases, the women’s bureau is responsible not only for formulating policies and programmes to enhance equity between women and men but also for implementing them. This carries the risk that other public authorities will feel absolved from this concern in their regular work and programmes. This risk exists in any countries that does not have a national equality policy, set out in a national plan and subscribed to and adopted *by the whole State*. By suggesting concrete activities and projects to be promoted by the mechanism for the advancement of women, rather than national objectives or commitments, such “action plans” reveal the weak political institutionality of the gender perspective.

Not surprisingly, nearly all national mechanisms see the *promotion and formulation* of policies and programmes for equality as their main task; and while some still assume responsibility for implementing these policies and programmes, it is notable that many others no longer include this in their mandates. This could mean we are witnessing a redefinition of the objectives and functions of national mechanisms, in line with the growing acceptance of the gender mainstreaming strategy to make equity a transversal concern in all sectoral policies. It is also noteworthy that, among their functions or strategies, several mechanisms stress the promotion of *interinstitutional coordination and cooperation* with a view to achieving this transversality. Apart from coordination at the national level, and given increasing State decentralization, some cases strongly emphasize the need also to promote coordination with institutions locally.

³ As Guzmán argues, it is clear that the purpose and nature of women’s offices has changed over time, in keeping with advances in understanding and knowledge of gender relations and the social and economic changes in the region; they have also been influenced by the debate on the role of the State (Guzmán, 2000).

⁴ The quality of the available information does not admit more detailed statements; some governments mention the need to formulate or implement a national policy for women, without providing further details on the content of such plans and the objectives or strategic mechanisms adopted for implementation, whereas other countries identify quite specific strategies or actions in their list of commitments and objectives.

Lastly, several national mechanisms see the evaluation of equality policies and programmes as one of their functions. It would be interesting to investigate how this evaluation function is actually carried out in sectoral policies: how can a mechanism for the advancement of women “evaluate” the relevance and efficacy of labour and economic policies, in coordination with the relevant and competent authorities and structures in these technical areas? Mexico’s National Commission on Women establishes an interesting goal in this context. Rather than assuming the function of evaluating policies and programmes directly, it defines its responsibility as “*proposing policies, guidelines and criteria for the integration, execution, supervision, evaluation and control of the national women’s programme.*”

(ii) Gender equity in the economic and labour domains

The importance attached to gender-equity policies at government level will depend substantially on the openness that exists toward the design and implementation of social agendas in general. In most countries of the region, social and also labour market policies are characterized by low budgets and fragile institutions, and this has a direct effect on equity policies (ECLAC, 2000a, p. 21). Secondly, gender-equity policies in Latin America and the Caribbean have started out by choosing domains traditionally identified as “feminine” as their priority areas for intervention, such as education, health, domestic violence and policies — often of a welfare type — related to the fight against poverty and social exclusion.⁵ In this context, the extent to which gender-equity objectives are being addressed in “non-traditional” areas, such as economic and labour-market policies, and how they are being addressed, can be seen as indicators of progress towards more complex and comprehensive gender strategies.

Unsurprisingly, most countries referred in general terms to the goal of “fully integrating women into the development process”; and nearly all national plans and mechanisms for promoting gender equity cite labour and economic issues as areas of concern. The differences arise in the degree of attention that these topics receive, and how countries translate the general goal into other more specific objectives that point to a lesser or greater awareness of the mechanisms of discrimination and exclusion operating in the economic and labour domains. Attention to labour and economic issues is often closely linked to poverty reduction and improving the quality of life for poor women and their families. It is less common to find a broader approach that acknowledges the contribution of women to productive development and to their countries’ economic growth, and argues for the need to eliminate mechanisms of exclusion and discrimination faced by women in general as workers and producers.

Generally speaking, the *labour* issue attracts widespread attention, and a number of countries propose specific objectives and actions in this field. The most frequent areas of intervention relate to greater and better access for women to the labour market and to economic resources generally. Goals linked to improved professional training in accordance with market needs are also very popular, which is consistent with the tremendous importance the region has attached to human resource formation during the last decade, aimed at matching labour supply to market demands. The risk of this outlook is that the requirements of the market get prioritized over and above the needs of people (i.e. women and men), and that insufficient account is taken of other often more structural factors that hinder access to the labour market, such as gender stereotypes and systems that project men as economic providers and women as responsible for biological and social reproduction — activities that are socially and economically undervalued.

Other recurrent objectives relate to the following: data collection and research on the situation of women workers; reforms to labour legislation; job orientation; job quality and working conditions; social security; development of business capacity with a strong emphasis on microenterprise; a more equitable

⁵ Unlike gender-equity policies in Europe, for example, which arose in a context of growing and large-scale flow of women into the labour market, together with a desire to gradually integrate labour markets regionwide. The fact that male-female pay differentials were much greater in some countries than elsewhere in the European Community, raised the need to develop similar equality policies, in the first instance in the labour market, in order to eliminate mechanisms of false competition based on discrimination against women.

distribution and greater compatibility between paid work and family responsibilities; participation in labour unions and trade associations, among other things.

Although some national plans evidence a clear concern to *review labour policies and systems* from a gender perspective, in other cases the goals established do not entail structural changes in the roles and positions of women and men, and so do not require in-depth transformation at the policy and institutional level. The latter advocate greater participation women in existing labour systems and structures, without questioning the gender biases inherent in the systems and structures themselves, or their mechanisms of exclusion and segregation (occupational, for example), or the undervaluation of work done by women.

Among objectives relating to gender equity in economic development, governments in the region show a clear preference for specific topics and concerns such as poverty reduction (often with a special focus on heads of household); microenterprise promotion; and the advancement of rural women. In contrast, only a very few countries set objectives involving a review of (macro-) economic, commercial or financial policies from a gender-equity perspective. They mention activities such as: collecting statistics and economic data in order to carry out a gender analysis of the economy and the labour market; impact studies of (macro-) economic policies as they affect men and women; reviewing the allocation of public expenditure from a gender perspective, among other things.

Generally speaking, there is increasing interest in rethinking economic and labour policies in countries that are already implementing “second- (or third-) generation” plans for equality between men and women. Countries such as Argentina, Chile and Ecuador, for example, set objectives aimed at rethinking current paradigms of the development model itself, such as the need to value more highly unpaid work in the domestic and social domains. Other countries, such as the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Panama, refer explicitly to the need for the advocates of gender equity to participate in the formulation and the negotiation of economic, financial, commercial and sectoral policies. It is interesting to note that this greater attention to economic and labour policies in general is reinforced by objectives relating to greater access for women to decision-making, which clearly indicates an empowerment approach and a cultural break with the norms, roles and structures that discriminate against and exclude women from access to and exercise of public and economic power.

2. Sectoral equality plans in the economic and labour domains

In recent years some governments in the region have developed and adopted sectoral plans aimed at putting an end to practices of discrimination and exclusion that women endure in the economy at large and in the labour market. As can be seen in table 1, the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico and Paraguay report having done this.⁶ Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba and El Salvador report sectoral equality plans in the rural development area, and Bolivia mentions a plan specifically aimed at the development of the female micro-entrepreneur.⁷ The nature of these plans is not the same in all countries. In some cases, it has been possible to design and negotiate a more structural plan — sometimes with a thematic annex in addition to the National Plan — setting out guidelines, proposals and responsibilities at government level for a labour or rural policy with a gender perspective. Other cases involve specific action plans designed around a number of ongoing programmes or projects.

Significantly, no government in the region has reported plans specifically aimed at incorporating a concern for gender equity in the formulation and implementation of

⁶ On this point, the Government of Peru reports the existence of the female pro-youth job consolidation program, run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development. This is considered in the chapter on programs and projects.

⁷ Not specifically linked to economic policies but to the participation of women in decision-making, El Salvador reports the existence of a plan for strengthening the role of women in society through citizen participation, adopted in 1998 by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal.

macroeconomic, commercial, financial or fiscal policies, even though a goal of this type could have been formulated in the national equal opportunities plan.⁸

This study has not investigated the existence of departmental, provincial or municipal plans for the promotion of gender equity in the labour and economic domain, but it would be interesting to do so in the future, given the increasing importance of local policies at a time of ongoing State decentralization.

3. Incorporation of gender equity in economic and labour commitments

An important indicator for measuring the extent of gender mainstreaming in labour and economic policies is the explicit attention it receives — or does not receive — in national economic development and work/employment programmes (where these exist). The inclusion of gender equity objectives in “general” plans of national scope is often the outcome of hard bargaining at the highest political level. Consequently, they represent a major step forward, despite the fact that setting objectives does not in itself mean the implementation of affirmative actions guaranteeing their effective compliance.

An example of this is the case of Argentina where the first Equal Opportunities for Women in Employment programme (PIOME) formed a substantial part of the (national) Plan for Equal Opportunities for Women 1993-94, and arose as a coordinated initiative between the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the National Women’s Council. Subsequently, a new Equal Opportunities Plan was adopted (1995-99), and in 1997 the Government of Argentina signed the Plan for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women in Employment (Decree No. 254/97). The negotiations for this, based on a strategic alliance between individuals and institutions lobbying for gender equity in employment at both government and non-government level, succeeded in getting the objectives and arguments of the equality in employment plan accepted and explicitly included in the Federal Labour Covenant of 28 May 1998.

Mexico provides another interesting example, where, since 1999, in the Social Development Covenant of the Ministry of Social Development, which defines social and productive development in poor regions, the government has incorporated a gender perspective that specifically requires 50% of resources and actions to address the specific needs of women.

Lastly, the Government of Peru reports that several sectoral ministries, including Labour and Social Development, Justice, Interior, and the Office of the Presidency, along with regional and local governments, are in the process of building into their annual plans a budget for implementing the National Equal Opportunities Plan.

As table 2 shows, there are still only a few governments that report gender mainstreaming in sectoral plans of national scope. There is clear evidence of more successful gender mainstreaming in national plans for social development and poverty reduction. As regards labour policies, the challenge here is to institutionalize the gender perspective in areas where public institutions themselves are minimal and fragile. Many of the region’s countries currently lack a clear and concerted national employment policy, which obviously makes gender mainstreaming more difficult in this area. Significantly, no information was received giving evidence of gender mainstreaming in national plans relating to macroeconomic, commercial or financial policies.

Table 2
NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS THAT
INCLUDE GENDER EQUITY COMMITMENTS (1990s)

⁸ Only the Ministry of Industry and Trade in Honduras states, without giving further information, that “the Ministry has adopted a new vision, a new outlook that has made it possible to incorporate an inclusive approach characterized by the gender dimension.” In addition, it states that “this perspective enables us to execute objectives, and comprehensive and holistic policies and measures, with an equity focus in favour of a variety of economic and social agents, both men and women.”

Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal Labour Covenant, 1998: Subscribes to the Plan for Equality of Opportunities between Men and Women in Employment.
Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Economic and Social Development Plan 1997 – 2001 ▪ National Industrial Competitiveness and Development Plan ▪ Strategic Productive Actions Programme ▪ Strategy for the Productive Restructuring of Agriculture
Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All plans in existence claim to promote women's participation based on equal opportunities and possibilities.
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Social Development Plan: Women's Policies 1996-2005 ▪ Presidential report by Dr. Jamil Mahuad (1999) contains a specific chapter on gender equity and includes budgetary allocations.
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Development Covenant, Section 26: "Social and Productive Development in Poor Regions". Gender mainstreaming aiming for 50% of resources and actions to address women's needs (as from 1999). ▪ Women's Programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1998). Gender mainstreaming in foreign policy goals, and improving the situation of women workers. ▪ Global Microenterprise Development Programme
Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State sectors currently assigning budgets to implement the National Equal Opportunities Plan in their annual plans ▪ Targeted Strategy to Combat Extreme Poverty (1997) ▪ Economic and Social Investment Targeting Programme, PROFINES (1998)

Source: ECLAC, on the basis of published information and that provided by governments in the 1999 and 2000 survey.

B. Sectoral and interinstitutional mechanisms

1. Gender units in ministries or institutions connected with economic development and employment

Experience shows that to fully implement the commitments assumed by the region's governments, it is essential to have structures that enjoy political recognition and are endowed with technical and financial resources. These play a key role in promoting and coordinating equality policies, apart from providing the technical consulting services needed to infuse gender analysis into all areas of institutional activity. Although most countries have national mechanisms, their levels of institutionality and technical and political capacity to guide this process vary widely. In some countries, "minimal" mechanisms were set up to comply with international mandates, but without the resources needed to bring about change in the current modes of public policy-making. Even in countries where national mechanisms have greater political, technical and financial resources for fulfilling their brief, experience has shown the importance of having units, commissions or specialist desks inside sectoral ministries.

As certain issues gain importance on the national agenda, and gender lobbyists succeed in mobilizing social and political actors to address such topics from a gender perspective, sectoral units are emerging in the region that concentrate on promoting equity in specific technical areas. This diagnostic study investigates the existence of such units in ministries and national institutions of major importance in labour and economic policy-making.

The available information (see table 3) shows that labour ministries have been gradually creating units of this type, especially in the second half of the 1990s. Among other countries, they exist in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico and Paraguay, although levels of institutionality vary. Although the type of information collected in this study does not admit a more thorough analysis, it seems that some "women's units" are more structurally involved in the design of employment policies and programmes, while other units have been created around specific programmes.

A number of governments report that certain State institutions involved in professional training, labour market studies and collecting statistics have also set up specific internal structures to ensure greater gender awareness in their activities. Costa Rica and Panama report such a unit in their national technical and professional training bodies. Panama draws attention to the Women Workers Unit in the Panamanian Institute of Labour Studies (IPEL), while the Dominican Republic and Mexico report setting up a gender unit in their respective national statistical institutes.

Agriculture ministries and national institutes of agriculture have been very active in several countries — more so than their counterparts in the labour domain — in creating units that advocate on behalf of the economic and labour rights of rural women. Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico and Uruguay have several national organizations in this field that have set up units to promote the rights of rural women. They also exist in Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, among other countries. According to available data, most of the units currently existing in these institutions were set up in the second half of the 1990s. This does not mean that they are the first units to have been set up, however, since information from Ecuador confirms that the first unit in the Agriculture Ministry dates back to 1968. The fact that such units often disappear, get restructured or change their name when there is a change of government, shows that they are highly dependent on political circumstances. This does not favour their continuity and makes sustainable gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies more difficult.

To what extent have units been created that lobby for gender equity in ministries or national institutions responsible for policy-making and negotiation in the areas of economic, productive commercial and financial development? None of the region's countries has mentioned the existence of gender units inside their trade, economic affairs or finance ministries. The only information on this comes from Paraguay where there is a Women's Area in the Social Department of the Technical Secretariat for Economic and Social Policies; and three other countries that report a focal point for gender or women's issues in one of other of these organizations. These are the Ministry of Economic Affairs in Barbados; the National Institute of Cooperative Development (INFOCOOP) and the National Production Council in Costa Rica; and the Ministry of Industry and Trade in Honduras.

Argentina, Bahamas, Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Peru all mention the existence of units for the advancement of women in their foreign affairs ministries. Nonetheless, the information received shows that these units are primarily devoted to strengthening international technical cooperation links, rather than promoting gender awareness in the country's international or commercial policies.

Some countries seem to have a clear strategy of establishing focal points or delegates in sectoral ministries; these include Colombia, Costa Rica and Guatemala. In the absence of units to deal with and monitor gender mainstreaming activities in the substantive work of the ministry, focal points tend to be officials with responsibility for raising awareness about gender issues. Apart from their "regular" professional responsibilities, they are also expected to act as institutional reference points for gender-equity issues. Nonetheless, it is not entirely clear on what basis a person is designated as a "focal point"; what exactly are the responsibilities involved; what resources (time, technical and financial) are assigned to carry out the task; what is their technical training in the area; and how is the additional responsibility recognized and rewarded institutionally?

Table 3

GENDER EQUALITY UNITS AND FOCAL POINTS (AT GOVERNMENT LEVEL IN THE 1990s)

	Ministry or responsible institution			National Institute				
	Labour	Agriculture	Foreign Affairs	Productive development	Environment ^a	Professional training	Statistics	Social Security
Argentina	X		X					
Bahamas			X					
Barbados				•				
Belize			<i>"Focal points have been appointed for each government ministry"</i>					
Bolivia	X	X						
Brazil	X							
Chile	X	X						
Colombia	•	•	•	•		•		•
Costa Rica	•	•		•	•			
Cuba	X	X						
Dominica	/	/	/	/	/		X	
Ecuador		X						
El Salvador		X						
Guatemala	X	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Honduras				•				
Mexico	X	X	X		X		X	
Nicaragua					X			
Panama	X	X	X		X	X		
Paraguay	X	X						
Peru		X	X					
Dominican Republic		X					X	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		X						
Uruguay		X						

Source: ECLAC, on the basis of published information and that provided by governments in the 1999 and 2000 survey.

^a May include energy and natural resources

X units • Focal points / non-existent

In the absence of transparent and pragmatic rules and procedures defining the profile, responsibilities, resources, working conditions and mechanisms for institutional recognition of focal points, there is a risk of limited impact without achieving a sustainable process. Transversal gender mainstreaming cannot be achieved without resources; it requires the presence of experts and specialized units to guide and monitor the process. Nonetheless, in institutions that lack specific units, designation of a focal point may be an initial step in a process leading to greater recognition of the urgent need to take due account of gender variables and relations in policy formulation and implementation. A well designed structure of focal points can play a supporting role, provided it enjoys political recognition from decision-makers, and technical support from a professional gender unit endowed with adequate resources.

2. Intersectoral committees and agreements.

Intersectoral work and coordination is proving to be a valuable mechanism for transversal gender mainstreaming. This is not a coincidence given that the gender perspective involves an integrated multidisciplinary approach and practices, requiring intersectoral and interinstitutional strategies to link economic objectives to social goals, including those relating to equity. One strategy that national mechanisms for the advancement of women have adopted to promote interministerial and intersectoral cooperation is to negotiate cooperation agreements with certain ministries or sectoral institutions. Interministerial cooperation agreements are generally an expression of willingness, and a mechanism for distributing responsibilities and tasks in the process of transversally infusing gender awareness into public programmes and policies. Existing interinstitutional collaboration committees or agreements relate to (a) equal opportunities in general; (b) the labour market; (c) rural development; and (d) business and productive development.⁹

(i) Intersectoral cooperation on equality policies in general.

The responses received firstly mention the existence of intersectoral mechanisms to deal with and coordinate policies and programmes to improve equality of opportunities and treatment between women and men, as a follow up to commitments assumed by governments and included in their national equality plans (see table A1 in Annex p. 67). Committees of this type exist in the vast majority of countries in the region and are chaired by national mechanisms for the advancement of women. Unfortunately, in general there is no information on the extent to which ministries of labour, economic affairs, finance and trade participate officially — and in practice — in these coordination spaces, nor as to the importance of labour or economic issues on their agenda.

Replies received in 1999 from sectoral ministries seem instead to suggest they do not participate in such committees, apart from certain labour and agriculture ministries.

Several countries also refer to the existence of coordination committees between the governmental mechanism for the advancement of women and women's organizations in civil society for the purpose of following up on the Beijing Platform. Without doubt, the broader women's movement grouped in a variety of civil society organizations is a major driving force for gender mainstreaming in public policies and structures. If the State accepts proposals from the social movement and adopts a national plan and strategy incorporating them, it will be easier to create the strategic alliances needed to obtain commitments from other sectors traditionally less open to gender-equity demands.

(ii) Intersectoral cooperation on equality policies in employment.

The following countries have intersectoral coordination mechanisms on issues relating to equal opportunities in employment: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Suriname and Uruguay (see table A2 in Annex p. 68). In the southern cone countries, there are tripartite commissions for the equality of opportunities and treatment between

⁹ The information obtained on intersectoral committees and conventions relating to the generation of statistical information with a gender perspective will be addressed in chapter 5, which considers the availability, analysis and use of gender-specific data.

women and men in employment. These are more or less formalized spaces for agreeing and designing labour market policies with a gender perspective, with representatives from the Ministry of Labour (the coordinating mechanism), the national mechanism for the advancement of women, and leading business and union organizations. They were created in Argentina (1998), Brazil¹⁰ (1996), Chile (1995), Paraguay (1998) and Uruguay (1997), and have been supported by an ILO technical cooperation programme in the region.

Based on a similar international co-operation programme, tripartite coordination mechanisms have also been established over the last decade in El Salvador, Mexico and Suriname, thus demonstrating the important role international organizations can play in stimulating gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies. Another interesting case is Cuba, with its Female Employment Commissions that were first institutionalized in the 1980s and then revived in 1996. These include representatives from the Federation of Cuban Women and the Cuban Labour Union Congress, and are coordinated by the Ministry of Labour.

There are also cooperation agreements between the national mechanism for the advancement of women and Ministries of Labour in countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay and Peru (see table A2 in Annex p. 68). Analysing the content and scope of these agreements was not one of the aims of this study, so it is impossible to specify the extent to which they prioritize specific areas or topics, or indicate certain collaboration mechanisms in more general terms. Nonetheless, the data provided do show that some of these agreements establish priorities and cooperation mechanisms on specific issues such as: professional training (Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic Paraguay and Peru, among others); social security standardization (Chile); and labour-market research with a gender perspective (Ecuador and Guatemala, among others).

Chile is the countries in the region where the National Women's Service (SERNAM) seems to have adopted a strategy of entering into intersectoral agreements. Apart from those mentioned above, cooperation agreements have been signed annually since 1991 with the National Board for Nursery Schools (JUNJI), which is responsible for day-care centres for the children of female workers.

(iii) Intersectoral cooperation on equality policies in rural development

Not surprisingly, considering the existence of sectoral structures and plans to promote gender equity in *rural and agricultural* policies, the creation of intersectoral mechanisms in this field also gets highlighted (see table A.3 in Annex p. 70). Chile, Cuba, Ecuador and Mexico report the existence of interministerial committees to coordinate policies and programmes addressing the position and situation of women in rural development; and a number of countries claim to have signed various interinstitutional agreements in this regard. In Chile for example, SERNAM has signed annual agreements with: the National Institute for Agricultural Development (INDAP) starting in 1995; the Crop Farming and Livestock Service (SAG) as from 1997; the Agricultural Communications, Training and Culture Foundation (FUCOA) since 1998; and the National Forestry Service, since 1998. In the Dominican Republic, interinstitutional agreements have been established between SEM, Banco Agrícola Dominicano, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Dominican Agrarian Institute and the National Federation of Rural Women. The Governments of Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Paraguay also mention similar agreements.

(iv) Intersectoral cooperation on equality policies in economic, business, commercial and financial development

¹⁰ In the case of Brazil, the "Working group for the elimination of discrimination the in employment and work" (GTEDEO) tackles discrimination based not only on gender but also on the grounds of race and ethnic origin.

Only two intersectoral committees are known of in the economic, business, commercial and financial development policy fields. The National Women's Council in Argentina mentions a joint committee with the Undersecretariat for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise concerning a credit programme, and another with the Ministry of Economic Affairs concerning a productive restructuring programme (see table A.4 in Annex p. 71). Few countries report interinstitutional cooperation agreements in these areas, and where they do, they seldom mention their topics or scope. Even so, existing agreements in the economic-policy area tend to be included in poverty-reduction programmes and focus on microenterprise and small business development.¹¹

Mexico, for example, mentions the Social Development Agreement of the Secretariat of Social Development (SEDESOL) and a framework agreement between CONMUJER and Nacional Financiera in connection with the programme "Women entrepreneurs, women producers". The Undersecretariat for Gender Issues, Generational Affairs and Family, of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Planning in Bolivia, has signed agreements with the Undersecretariat for Microenterprise and the Departmental Small Business Association, and also mentions an agreement with the Vice Ministry of Industry and Internal Commerce; the Cuban Women's Federation has signed annual agreements with the Sugar Ministry ever since 1992; and the National Women's Bureau (ONAM) reports having prepared a national policy for the development and advancement of women in Guatemala in conjunction with the General Secretariat of the National Economic Planning Council. Agreements have also been signed by SEM in the Dominican Republic with the Centre for the Promotion of Exports (CEDOPEX), the Industrial Development Corporation and the National District Prosecutor's Department, along with agreements between SERAM and the Ministry of National Heritage since 1996.

It is interesting that governments do not mention interministerial mechanisms for coordinating macroeconomic, commercial and fiscal policies, to ensure they contain a (gender) equity perspective. The replies received from Ministries or Undersecretariats for Economic Affairs, Commerce, and Finance evidence an almost general absence of these ministries from interministerial committees for enhancing equity between women and men. Some of them explain this situation by arguing that "given the nature of their functions, such information is not within the competency of their office." Only the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit of Mexico claims to "maintain links on this issue with the Ministry of the Interior, through its general coordination with the National Women's Commission"; and the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Honduras reports having established coordination links with the National Women's Institute to facilitate joint monitoring of the Beijing Platform. In another case, the Vice Ministry of Industry and Internal Commerce in Bolivia states that "it is contemplating" establishing a technical committee in conjunction with the national mechanism for the advancement of gender equity, but it does not say what its functions or fields of action would be.

If the goal is economic development that is truly equitable in social and gender terms, gender analysis needs to be at the heart of (macro-) economic, financial and commercial decision-making. This calls for closer interinstitutional relations between the national mechanism for the advancement of women and relevant sectoral ministries, in addressing these issues.

Lastly, some countries of the region have more than one committee or intersectoral group coordinating policies or activities within a single thematic area. This is due to diversified goals and functions in these mechanisms, something that is also reflected in a different level of institutionality: in some cases, these are official spaces for policy coordination and negotiation at the national level, while others seem to be workgroups that coordinate activities in the framework of specific projects or programmes. In Chile, for example, there is the Women and Work desk at the Social Dialog Council,¹² a tripartite policy-making body; there is also an intersectoral coordination commission for activities carried

¹¹ As we shall see below, this trend seems to be confirmed in the review of programs and projects being carried out, where the topic of gender equity in economic development, is largely confined to "emergency" programs and projects as part of the fight against poverty, with significant attention being paid to the development of microenterprise and small business. They also often tend to have a more welfare-based than structural approach.

¹² According to information from SERNAM, the Women and Work desk, created in 2000, has replaced the Tripartite Commission for Equality of Opportunities between Women and Men in Employment.

out in the framework of the Labour Empowerment Programme for Low-Income Women. In Mexico, three different coordination groups were created in connection with a single programme for promoting more and better jobs for women.

3. Mechanisms at the local and regional level

Although the questionnaire sent out did not explicitly enquire about structures at the *local level*, several governments reported the existence of decentralized structures directly related to gender equity at work and in the economy. Published information also indicates the existence of interinstitutional agreements at a decentralized level. Thus for example, cooperation agreements between state governments in Mexico and the Undersecretariat for Rural Development at the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development (SAGAR) have strongly promoted gender awareness in all actions in their Women in Rural Development Programme.¹³

Presumably the current trend towards State decentralization, resulting in greater autonomy for local powers, is enhancing the capacity of provincial, municipal and local institutions to actively promote policies aimed at generating more and better jobs along with other economic opportunities for women. For this reason, the topic of gender mainstreaming in provincial and local authorities and institutions warrants deeper study in the future. Over the past decade a variety of units and commissions have been set up in non-governmental institutions and organizations, which are particularly important for labour policy-making. These include women's secretariats or commissions in labour union and business federations, together with women entrepreneur and professional organizations and networks and other NGOs specializing in female employment issues.

Equally significant is the emergence of new mechanisms — both governmental and non-governmental — working on gender equity in *regional economic integration processes*. As countries press ahead in negotiating and signing economic and social integration agreements, spaces emerge for political lobbying on behalf of gender mainstreaming in these regional agreements and policies. So far, they seem to have focused primarily on advocating more equitable labour market policies, but greater interest in scrutinizing commercial, financial and macroeconomic policies from a gender perspective and presenting public policy proposals in this regard can be expected in future.

C. Legal provisions

During the course of the twentieth century, the principle of equal rights between women and men has become enshrined in national constitutions and legislation worldwide. Historically, labour-market norms have been tended to be constructed around the paradigm of the working male as economic provider for the nuclear family. Although women have always taken part in productive work to a greater or lesser extent either inside or outside the home, social norms did not accord such “feminine” activities the value of work. The earliest labour market rules and legislation reinforced the social convention that a “decent” woman's place was in the home, and that a woman who “needed” to work required protection to safeguard her moral integrity and capacity to be — first and foremost — mother and spouse, keeper of the home and its members.¹⁴ In recent decades, however, it has been increasingly recognized that employment practices should be based on full equality of opportunities and treatment for women and men, in all spheres of human activity.

¹³ Chile and Paraguay also reported the existence of agreements at the regional, provincial or municipal level to coordinate gender-equity programmes in the labour and economic domains.

¹⁴ For further information on how labour regulations evolved from an approach that protects women with justifications that are largely sexist, towards protection based on human rights, the reader may consult the ILO publication on international norms of work and workers. (*Bloque Informativo*, 1995). This awareness-raising and training module clearly explained how the first international norms on female work were primarily concerned to safeguard the status quo of the existing gender structure, despite the social changes that were taking place in the labour market. Thus, for example, the prohibition of night-time work by women in Convention No 4, adopted in 1919, “was mainly due to a desire to safeguard women's virtue. ‘Night-time work’ was virtually a euphemism for prostitution. The argument that its initial objective was to lighten female work is not convincing, because it did not attempt to regulate piecework under carried out in the home” (ILO, 1995, p. 58).

As has been the case throughout the world, the women's movement in Latin America and the Caribbean — at both governmental and non-governmental level — has been an active promoter of legislative change aimed at guaranteeing a mode of economic development that is more equitable, primarily for women who contribute substantially to their countries' development yet receive neither adequate valuation of their work (also true of other social groups) nor a fair share of the benefits of development. A major step forward, which this study reveals as an important trend during the decade, has been the creation of structures within the legislative branch in more and more countries, aimed at promoting laws and legal procedures to ensure greater equity “under the law” between women and men in the labour and economic domains. These currently exist in 20 of the region's countries (ECLAC 1999b, p. 67). The work of national women's offices, in conjunction with parliamentarians of both sexes, as well as union organizations, NGOs and legal experts in this field has been notable.¹⁵ Given that several countries in the region reformed their labour codes and social security systems during the 1990s — or are currently in the process of doing so — the presence of these commissions has had a major impact on the debate and adoption of laws that are better thought out in gender terms.

These legal victories represent major advances in societies where the social contract is enshrined in a legal framework. The formulation of equality principles in legal texts and labour standards has made it necessary to rethink not only the legal status of women, but also their role in society and contribution to the economy. This progress is not sufficient, however, since “de jure” equality does not necessarily translate into “de facto” equity — still less in a regional setting that suffers from major shortcomings in the way legal regulations are implemented and enforced. Such advances are also set in a broader context of economic policies that do not always seem to lead to development with equity, as shown in numerous studies by prestigious institutions that report an increase in poverty globally, together with widening equity gaps between regions, social groups and sexes.

The profound and rapid changes taking place in economic policies and structures worldwide have been accompanied by the emergence of special work regimes and activities, the regulation of which has been called into question, along with profound changes in social security systems. Given this global context, the issue of labour and economic rights with a gender perspective clearly warrants specific study, if one wishes to fully describe progress and setbacks, and the challenges that lie ahead.

This summary merely highlights a number of trends relating to the principle of gender equity in labour regulations in the region over the last decade. It reviews (1) the ratification of international agreements that are particularly relevant to the advancement of gender equity at work and economic development; (2) national legislation introduced or amended during the 1990s, emphasizing certain issues of recurrent concern in the region; and (3) the implementation of State programmes and projects aimed at dissemination and training on the subject of women's economic and labour rights.

1. International conventions ratified

One of the characteristics of twentieth century policies has been the increasing visibility of the concept of universal human rights in the international arena. Governments have subscribed to a variety of conventions and international standards that constitute a body of international regulations setting out objectives to be achieved. Once countries ratify these conventions, they undertake to incorporate them into their national legislation and promote their full observance and compliance. In this section, we investigate the status of Latin American and Caribbean governments in terms of adopting and ratifying International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on the following issues: maternity protection (Nos. 3, 103 and 183); equal pay for equal work (No. 111); discrimination in employment and occupation (No. 100); reconciliation of work with family responsibilities (No. 156); together with international

¹⁵ In the context of ongoing democratization processes in several countries of the region, it is also worth mentioning the creation of human rights prosecution and defence offices. In some countries these include a structure to safeguard women's rights. Hopefully, in some countries at least, these prosecution and defence offices will have incorporated economic and labor rights into their action agenda.

agreements on political, and on economic, social and cultural rights; and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Countries' ratification of conventions on maternity protection is particularly important, since one of the main sources of discrimination against women in employment and economic development, has always been and remains their actual or potential status as a mother, and as the person mainly responsible for looking after children and other family members needing care. The sociocultural mandate that calls for women, rather than men, to provide "care services" altruistically and freely, as if this were a female biological condition and not a shared social responsibility, results in women entering paid employment under segregated and unequal terms. This seriously undermines the chances of achieving economic development with equity and overcoming poverty in a region where official figures show that between 20% and 37% of households depend for their economic sustenance solely on the work of a woman. The proportion is even higher among the poorest households where in some countries it rises above 50%.¹⁶

As can be seen in table 4, six countries from the Latin American region have so far ratified ILO Convention No. 3, while eight have ratified the revised Convention (N° 103) on the same topic since 1952.¹⁷ The low level of ratification worldwide — only 72 countries of the 174 ILO member States have ratified either Convention No. 3 or Convention No. 103 — together with the need to adapt to the changing situation of women in the labour market, led to a new Convention on maternity protection being adopted during the International Labour conference of June 2000.

Several Latin American governments played an active role in the process of adopting this new convention on maternity protection (Convention 183). The new convention widens the field of application and lengthens the period of job protection, while giving greater scope for exceptions to the main rules subject to prior consultation and agreement at national level between governments and both employer and worker organizations. National delegations from some of the region' countries — including Argentina, Chile and Uruguay — came to the conference with a clearly established position that had been debated nationally among the different social actors, including representatives from the national women's bureau, union organizations, and business, academic and other non-governmental organizations. They also expressed their concern about potentially negative consequences for women in some of the amendments proposed to the new convention.¹⁸

Another international Labour standard worth mentioning is Convention 100, on equal pay for equal work, adopted at the International Labour Conference of 1951. This is highly relevant regionally, where the income differential between men and women is still very pronounced, especially in the informal sector. In Latin America, women who work in the formal sector of the economy on average make 74% of what men earn, while in the informal sector female incomes are only just over half (52%) those of their male counterparts. To date, 27 of the region's countries have ratified Convention 100.

Table 4
RATIFICATION OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONVENTIONS FOR
GENDER EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT (AS AT AUGUST 2000)

	Convention 3^a	Convention 103	Convention 100	Convention 111	Convention 156
1. Antigua and Barbuda				1983	

¹⁶ See ECLAC (1998b, p. 283) - Percentages of households headed by women in each poverty bracket, based on special tabulations taken from household surveys in 17 of the region's countries.

¹⁷ As Convention N° 3 only protects women employed in industry and commerce, it was revised in 1952 for the first time, extending protection to women working in non-industrial and agricultural occupations, including wage-earners working at home and those engaged in wage-earning domestic work in private homes. Several exceptions to this general rule were authorized, however.

¹⁸ The faculty granted to countries to exclude certain categories of workers from the scope of the Convention, subject to prior consultation with employers and workers, was questioned. In a world where a union organizations are losing strength, collective bargaining is becoming weaker, and the interests of employers are gaining greater public legitimacy in the enthusiasm of countries to be able to display macroeconomic results, there is a risk that this may undermine workers bargaining power — especially among groups with least organizational capacity. Seven countries of the region voted in favour of the new Convention (Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Cuba, Panama, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago); and seven countries voted against (Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Venezuela). Worldwide, 304 countries voted in favour, 22 against and 116 abstained (see ILO, 2000).

2. Argentina	1933		1956	1968	1988
3. Bahamas					
4. Barbados			1974	1974	
5. Belize		2000	1999	1999	1999
6. Bolivia		1973	1973	1977	1998
7. Brazil		1965	1957	1965	
8. Chile		1994	1971	1971	1994
9. Colombia	1933		1963	1969	
10. Costa Rica			1960	1962	
11. Cuba	1928	1954	1954	1965	
12. Dominica			1983	1983	
13. Ecuador		1962	1957	1962	
14. El Salvador			2000	1995	2000
15. Granada			1994		
16. Guatemala		1989	1961	1960	1994
17. Guyana			1975	1975	
18. Haiti			1958	1976	
19. Honduras			1956	1966	
20. Jamaica			1975	1975	
21. Mexico			1952	1961	
22. Nicaragua	1934		1967	1967	
23. Panama	1958		1958	1966	
24. Paraguay			1964	1967	
25. Peru			1960	1970	1986
26. Dominican Republic			1953	1964	
27. St. Kitts and Nevis					
28. St. Lucia			1983	1983	
29. St. Vincent and the Grenadines					
30. Suriname					
31. Trinidad and Tobago			1997	1970	
32. Uruguay		1954	1989	1989	1989
33. Venezuela	1944		1982	1971	1984
Total number of States to have ratified	6	8	27	28	8

Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), "Ratifications of the Last Twelve Months, May 2001 (<http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/index.cfm?lang=EN>).

^a Description of Conventions investigated:

Convention 3 (1919): Maternity protection; ratified by 33 countries worldwide

Convention 103 (1952): Maternity protection (revised); ratified by 39 countries worldwide

Convention 110 (1951): Equal pay; ratified by 147 countries worldwide

Convention 111 (1958): Discrimination in employment and occupation; ratified by 143 countries worldwide

Convention 156 (1981): Workers with family responsibilities; ratified by 31 countries worldwide

The International Labour Conference of 1958 gave rise to Convention 111 promoting equality of opportunities and treatment with respect to employment and occupation, free from not only discrimination based on gender but also on the grounds of race, colour, religion, political opinion, and national or social origin. The fact that women have attained higher education levels than men in many countries of the region, yet wage gaps are even more pronounced between women and men with post-secondary studies, merely shows that there are discrimination mechanisms operating against women in employment that are not based on differences of ability. Hence the importance of this Convention, which has been ratified by 28 countries worldwide, including El Salvador and Belize during the 1990s (1995 and 1999, respectively). Any member State ratifying Convention 111 is obliged (under Article 2) to formulate and implement a national policy to promote equality of opportunities and treatment in employment and occupation, with a view to eliminating all forms of discrimination in this area.¹⁹

Mention should also be made of Convention N° 156 on workers with family responsibilities, adopted by ILO member States in 1981. This aimed to create and foster a balance between work and family life for workers of both sexes with responsibilities towards children in their charge, or towards other members of their direct

¹⁹ On 18 June 1998, ILO member countries also adopted the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, which commits member States — even if they have not ratified the corresponding conventions — to respect principles concerning fundamental rights, in good faith and in accordance with the Constitution. The conventions considered as fundamental include those concerning equal pay (No. 100), and non-discrimination (No. 111). See ILO (1998).

family. The convention makes the assumption that “while pregnancy, childbearing and breast-feeding are exclusive to women for biological reasons, reproduction is a social function that ought to receive protection from the community” (ILO, 1993; p. 3). The 1990s saw an intensification of the trend seen in the previous decade in which women of reproductive age rapidly increased their labour-market participation (Abramo, 2000, p. 18). This reinforces the need for new social arrangements to enable both women and men to combine paid work with family life and reproductive tasks. So far, eight of the region’s countries have ratified this Convention: Argentina, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela in the 1980s, and Belize, Chile, El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1990s. Since Convention 156 can be seen as a key tool in pursuit of the broader objective of giving every man and woman the chance of full personal development both in social, economic and public life and in the more private domain of the family and home, it is right to continue²⁰ pressing for its ratification at the regional and international level.

Other human rights treaties of major importance for the promotion of gender equity in the economic and labour domains include the International Covenant on Civil Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both of which were adopted by the international community in 1966. The first of these was ratified by 28 Latin American governments and the second by 26 of the region’s countries. It also is worth mentioning the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in which Articles 11, 13 and 14 contain provisions aimed at eliminating discrimination against women in the economic and employment domains. By the late 1990s, all the region’s countries had ratified this Convention, thereby committing themselves to adapt their national legislation and promote State policies aimed at reversing phenomena of exclusion and discrimination against women. Table 5 also indicates the countries that signed the Convention’s optional protocol in 1999-2000, a prior step to possible ratification of the protocol promoting more effective implementation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), by widening its interpretation and practical application, and introducing remedy rights to make it possible to obtain redress in individual cases.

Ratification of these international conventions by the vast majority of Latin American and Caribbean governments is important, provided citizens are kept informed about the commitments assumed, and manage to lobby for their compliance in national legislation, policies and practices.

2. New or amended national legislation

Governments also report on legislative amendments or new laws in their constitutions and in their labour, criminal or civil codes, along with decrees regulating the activities of national women’s offices and the implementation of national equality plans. This document limits itself to mentioning changes or processes carried out during the 1990s in the labour and economic domains, as reported by the countries themselves. The women’s rights that were most highly profiled and discussed in national congresses during the 1990s concerned the following topics: access to economic and productive resources; wage inequality; irregular or part-time work modalities; social security; maternity protection; combining paid work with family responsibilities; domestic work; sexual harassment and affirmative action measures.

Table 5

**RATIFICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE
FOR GENDER EQUALITY (AS AT JUNE 2000)**

	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979)	CEDAW Optional Protocol (1999)
1. Antigua and Barbuda			1989	
2. Argentina	1986	1986	1985	2000

²⁰ Convention 156 has been ratified by just 31 countries worldwide.

3. Bahamas			1993	
4. Barbados	1973	1973	1980	
5. Belize	1996		1990	
6. Bolivia	1982	1982	1990	1999
7. Brazil	1992	1992	1984	
8. Chile	1972	1972	1989	1999
9. Colombia	1969	1969	1982	1999
10. Costa Rica	1968	1968	1986	1999
11. Cuba			1980	2000
12. Dominica	1993	1993	1980	
13. Ecuador	1969	1969	1981	1999
14. El Salvador	1979	1979	1981	
15. Grenada	1991	1991	1990	
16. Guatemala	1992	1988	1982	
17. Guyana	1977	1977	1980	
18. Haiti	1991		1981	
19. Honduras	1997	1981	1983	
20. Jamaica	1975	1975	1984	
21. Mexico	1981	1981	1981	1999
22. Nicaragua	1980	1980	1981	
23. Panama	1977	1977	1981	2000
24. Paraguay	1992	1992	1987	1999
25. Peru	1978	1978	1982	
26. Dominican Republic	1978	1978	1982	2000
27. St. Kitts and Nevis			1985	
28. St. Lucia			1982	
29. St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1981	1981	1981	
30. Suriname	1976	1976	1993	
31. Trinidad and Tobago	1978	1978	1990	
32. Uruguay	1970	1970	1981	2000
33. Venezuela	1978	1978	1983	2000
Total number of States to have ratified	28	26	33	0
Total number of States that have only signed so far	/	/	/	13
States that have neither ratified nor signed	5	7	0	20

Source : United Nations, "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", Division for the Advancement of Women (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw>); Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General: Status as at 30 April 1999, New York, 1999, pp. 116-117 and 128-129.

Dates in italics: Signature prior to ratification.

A methodological warning is in order here. Firstly, not all countries have provided information on legal developments. Secondly, the examples presented here are not comparable with what may have been achieved in previous decades, so is it impossible to assess progress or lack of it at the national level, nor make regionwide comparisons. When a country abolishes a law requiring a woman to obtain her husband's or father's permission to work outside the home, it is undoubtedly a major step forward in terms of gender equity nationally. Yet some countries of the region may have amended similar laws in earlier decades, while in other countries such laws may still be fully in force. Thirdly, the adoption of specific provisions to guarantee the absence of gender discrimination at work, although very important in itself, may in practice be accompanied by economic or labour laws that undermine the general situation and conditions of work and life for men and women alike.

In many countries of the region, reforms made to labour codes and social security systems in recent decades have sometimes made it possible to introduce new regulations guaranteeing greater equality of opportunities and treatment for women. Nonetheless, at the same time, doubts have been raised about the capacity of these new systems to guarantee economic and social security for the vast majority of the population. It is important to remember that gender equity is an indivisible and substantive part of social equity, and vice-versa, so genuine advances in gender equity will be accompanied by progress in fulfilling basic labour and human rights. Otherwise, references to "equality of opportunities between women and men" risk being merely cosmetic and lacking in substantive implications.

The examples presented by the countries include legal provisions aimed at guaranteeing equality of opportunities and treatment between women and men in a more general sense. In some countries, such as Argentina, Ecuador and Venezuela, the drafting of a new political constitution has enabled the women's social movement to negotiate the inclusion of demands relating to women's economic and labour rights. The 1994 constitutional reform in Argentina also provided the opportunity to include a provision promoting equality in employment (Art. 75., No. 23); and the new constitution of Ecuador includes equal access rights to economic resources and economic decision-making (Art. 34), while banning all forms of labour discrimination against women (Art. 36) and recognizing unpaid domestic work as productive labour (Art. 36).

Mention is also made of amendments in civil, family or criminal law that have major consequences for women's economic and labour autonomy. Thus, for example, the Government of the Netherlands Antilles reports a review of its tax laws, guaranteeing full fiscal independence for married women workers as from January 1998. The case of El Salvador is also interesting, where, in 1998, the offence of "labour discrimination" was drafted into the criminal code, with prison sentences ranging from six months to two years; as was the offence of "acts against the right to equality" carrying a prison term of between one and three years. In 1994, Uruguay enacted Law 16.045 on equality of opportunities and treatment in all labour activity (with bylaws issued by Decree in 1997), establishing specific judicial procedures for this purpose. Since 1992, Paraguay has had legislation (Law No. 1) that expressly establishes "the liberty of either spouse to carry on any legitimate profession or job and undertake work outside the home."

As regards equality in agricultural work and in *access to economic and productive resources*, there have been reforms in agrarian laws and regulations. In Mexico, for example, the new Agrarian Act establishes protection of the Women's Agricultural Industrial Unit and stipulates in Article 71 that *ejido* lands may reserve an area ("preferably on the best land") for setting up farms or industries run by women over 16 years of age. The 1984 reform of labour regulations in Chile made improvements relating to accommodation, food and transport for seasonal agricultural workers (Art.95), which encompasses a large number of women. Some countries have also amended laws facilitating women's access to credit (e.g. Dominica).

Apart from rules concerning the microeconomy, governments seldom mention gender-equity provisions in laws dealing with access to and control of economic resources. Lack of concern for equity and equality issues in financial, fiscal, commercial, property and investment legislation is worrying in view of the rapid changes taking place in these areas.

On the question of *equal pay*, several countries cite laws stipulating the right to receive "equal pay for equal work" (e.g. Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico). Some of the new legislation adopted in the last decade has gone a lot further by guaranteeing "equal pay for work of equal value" (e.g. Ecuador in its new constitution), in keeping with the international regulations issued by ILO on this issue. Law 16.045 in Uruguay prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex in "pay criteria", with an additional ban on discrimination in "performance appraisal."

New rules like this are important because they address wage discrimination in its broadest sense, and make it possible — in theory — to embrace indirect wage discrimination by revaluing occupational categories and reviewing methods of performance appraisal. As a result, it ought to be possible to prevent the concentration of women in certain jobs being used as a mechanism of discrimination by assigning them a low social value, presumed low technical qualification, less importance and lower economic value. For existing laws to lead to *de facto* wage equality, the region's governments need to adopt pragmatic legal procedures and mechanisms aimed at reviewing occupational classifications and revaluing jobs done by women.

Some governments mention efforts made in the last decade to guarantee the rights of workers, mostly women, employed *part-time and working in new more flexible modalities* that are deemed to be more precarious. In 1995, Argentina passed the Employment Promotion Act (Law No. 24.465) which

refers to *part-time labour contracts* in Article 92 bis, stating that pay must be at least proportional to that received by a full-time worker in the same category or job, as set by law or in a collective bargaining contract, and that social security contributions must be made in proportion to pay (Márquez Garmendia, 1998, p. 17). In 1993, Article 27 of the reform to the Chilean labour code established a working week of up to 72 hours in the case of people carrying out discontinuous or intermittent jobs, or those only requiring the worker's presence. By law, such people may not spend more than 12 hours a day at the workplace and must have a rest period of at least one hour during the working day. This is a significant legal step for the vast majority of women who work in activities with these characteristics, such as domestic service and jobs in restaurant and hotels (Márquez Garmendia, 1998, pp. 5-6).

Several governments mention the adoption of regulations to ensure more equitable access for women to *technical and professional training* programmes. In Argentina, Law 24.576 speaks of male and female workers for the first time and includes a new chapter in the Labour Contract Act dealing with professional training, which refers to equality of opportunities between male and female workers (CNM, 2000). In Uruguay, the National Employment Office was established in 1992 to propose and implement labour and professional training programmes and manage the labour retraining fund, set up with employer and employee contributions for this purpose. Law 16.736 (1995) includes among groups to be assisted, those with "difficulties entering the labour market or with employment limitations," which are considered to include women (Márquez Garmendia, 1998, p. 36).

Social Security is another area where legal reforms have been made, mainly in order to reduce the fiscal deficit generated by unfunded State systems. In most of the region, these are being replaced by individual capitalization schemes. Several studies show that this is turning the former "social" security system into an "individual" security system based on the financial returns earned on personal savings contributions. Several authors claim that the new system is undermining the "universality" of rights, and seems particularly to have a negative effect on low-income affiliates and those working under more precarious labour arrangements — categories that contain a disproportionate number of women. They also claim that these new schemes are often more discriminatory in social and gender equity terms.²¹

Nonetheless, while not denying this general situation, it is also true that the women's movement has sometimes been able to take advantage of reform processes to introduce clauses and provisions that imply a significant conceptual and legal advance in terms of equal opportunities between women and men. In 1996, for example, the Netherlands Antilles changed its *Old Insurance Act* and gave the right to retirement contributions and benefits to all people, with women as direct beneficiaries rather than only via their spouses. In Argentina, the reform of the previous regime (Law 24.241, 1993) included the possibility for "housewives" to join the system — in the category of voluntary affiliation.²² Other countries claiming to have promoted legal reforms giving better coverage for women in social security systems are Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru and Uruguay.

Many countries have introduced legal reforms on maternity protection (e.g. Brazil, Chile, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Netherlands Antilles and Uruguay), including longer periods off work and the prohibition of dismissal on pregnancy or maternity grounds. Some countries point out that the right to maternity protection is enshrined in the national constitution (Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador and Peru) which formally upgrades the legal recognition of this right.²³ In Venezuela, a new organic labour law came into force in 1990, extending the prohibition of dismissal during pregnancy to one year after childbirth. Brazil passed a law in 1995 imposing severe penalties on employers demanding a pregnancy certificate, test or statement, or otherwise sterilization as a precondition for employment; and

²¹ See Castillo Rojas, M.J. (1998); Elter, D. (1995); Márquez Garmendía, M. (1998); Madrid de Torres, H.L. (1999) and others.

²² Joining the new integrated retirement and pension system is compulsory for workers in general, both dependent and self-employed.

²³ For a more detailed study of national legislation on maternity protection in Latin America, see the study by Abramo (2000). This shows that several Latin American countries (the study does not cover Caribbean countries) have national maternity protection provisions that guarantee greater coverage than that envisaged in the respective ILO conventions. Thus, of 17 countries analysed, all have obligatory maternity leave, and this is longer than 12 weeks in seven countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru and Venezuela). In 14 of the countries analysed, the woman stays on full pay whereas Conventions 103 (1952) and 183 (2000) stipulate no less than two-thirds of previous earnings.

Colombia has issued a decree restricting the right of employers to demand pregnancy tests from jobseekers (ILO, 1999b, p. 13). In Brazil, work absences due to maternity or miscarriage/abortion are classified as justified, and so are not deducted from annual days off or holidays. In addition, in 1994 Law 8.921/94 eliminated the expression “non-criminal” qualifying abortion in such cases.

There are also interesting cases where the law gives the contractually employed working mother the right to take an additional six months unpaid leave and still keep her job (Argentina,²⁴ Cuba). Other countries report provisions adopted or extended in the last decade to facilitate breast-feeding for the young children of working mothers (e.g. Chile and Ecuador).

Another related issue that has been the subject of legal amendments involves reconciling paid work with family responsibilities. There is increasing debate in the region over the distinction between laws to cater adequately to the physiological demands of maternity, on the one hand, and social reproduction needs that can be shared between men and women, on the other. In most cases, however, the region’s labour laws continue to assign these responsibilities unilaterally to women, which makes it difficult for them to participate in the economy under equality of opportunity and conditions.

Some countries claim to have made progress in rules on access to childcare or pre-school services (including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Venezuela). Paraguay and Venezuela require firms to provide this service if they hire over a certain number of workers of either sex, which is a step forward in that such rights and obligations are not linked to women alone. Law 9.394 passed in Brazil in 1996, is interesting because it defines the provision of free child care between birth and six years of age as a State duty, and sees this as a direct right of the child rather than a right pertaining to the mother or father. Other countries cite progress on family leave, time off for adoption or a child’s illness, and other provisions that help promote parental co-responsibility (Chile and Uruguay, among others).

Available data suggest that there are still no legal regulations in the region on so-called “parental leave”²⁵ after the post-partum period, to enable either of the parents to look after the child for a certain time even in the absence of illness. In Chile, post-natal leave is only given to the father where the mother has died in childbirth.

In relation to *domestic work*, both undertaken by paid domestic employees and work done by other women without payment, there have been several legal amendments that could be considered progress. Some countries, such as Chile, have made progress in regularizing paid domestic work and improving social security access and coverage for domestic employees. Other countries have granted legal recognition to the social and productive value of unpaid domestic work (Ecuador and Venezuela, among others).

Sexual harassment at work is another topic to have come through very strongly in national debates; it has also been the subject of research and a number of new laws. Several of the region’s countries have adopted laws that typify, prohibit and penalize this practice, either in their criminal code (e.g. Ecuador and El Salvador), or in their labour code (e.g. Paraguay) or through separate legal provisions (e.g. Argentina, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Uruguay). Specific studies in the region have revealed the magnitude of this problem, which is directly related to asymmetric power relations not only between women and men but also between different social, economic and ethnic groups.²⁶ The trend seen in the last decade to explicitly ban and penalize sexual harassment is a significant step towards ensuring labour and economic relations that are more democratic and satisfactory for everyone, regardless of sex or other personal or social characteristics.

²⁴ In Argentina, Law 24.716 (1996) restricts this right to cases of children born with Down’s syndrome.

²⁵ Paternity leave in the region is limited to giving the father a couple of days off, and restricts the concept of paternity essentially to responsibility for registering the new-born baby at the civil registry and complying with other administrative procedures.

²⁶ A person’s chances of being a victim of sexual harassment are closely related to their perceived or assigned economic or social vulnerability status. Thus, people with a higher probability of being harassed include divorced and separated persons, single mothers and fathers, ethnic minorities, homosexuals, women doing jobs considered to be “masculine”, and people with irregular employment contracts.

Equally important is the gradual incorporation into the region's legislation of provisions calling for *affirmative action measures* to speed up the achievement of *de facto* equity between women and men, as required in Article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by all countries.

Argentina, for example, issued Decree 993/91 in 1991 relating to the National Civil Service Management Profession System, which seeks to ensure the absence of discrimination against women. Article 5 requires at least one woman to be appointed among the five members of the executive selection committee. The results have been eloquent: in less than five years, women's share of managerial posts has risen from 5% in 1993 to 28.6% in 1997 (CNM, May 2000). In 1994, the new Argentine constitution gave Congress the competency to "legislate and promote affirmative action measures to guarantee real equality of opportunities and treatment (...) particularly towards children, women, old people and the disabled" (Márquez Garmendia, 1998, p. 40). Also in Argentina, the Employment Development Act (Law 24.465) introduced measures to facilitate hiring, which included a special employment promotion modality offering specific incentives to employers to hire workers from specific groups, including women.

In Ecuador, the Employment Protection Act (published in the Official Registry, N° 124, 1997) refers to the hiring of "a minimum percentage of female workers, to be established by Ministry of Labour Sectoral Commissions". The new Agrarian Act in Mexico, mentioned above, contains specific regulations to ensure women's access to common land for productive purposes.

Several governments also report current legislative bills containing other reforms to guarantee greater and more equitable access for women to the labour market and to social security systems (including Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Uruguay). At the regional level, the most frequent issues addressed in bills currently on the table relate to the following: regulation of paid domestic work; typology and sanction of sexual harassment at work; and questions relating to social security access and benefits, especially for the least protected groups such as "housewives".

Lastly, the Governments of Bolivia and Guatemala both mention that they have more highly co-ordinated programmes endowed with their own resources to promote the review and adoption of labour and economic laws that are more gender equitable.

3. Information and training on rights

Ignorance among men and women about their rights and current national legislation can seriously diminish the practical benefit they obtain from them. This has led a number of national organizations for the advancement of women, often in coordination with sectoral labour ministries, to implement programmes and projects to publicize and provide training on economic and labour rights from a gender perspective. Table 6 classifies information from 18 such initiatives, 12 of which are coordinated by national mechanisms and six by labour ministries or related institutions.

In some cases these are structured programmes with their own funding and specifically defined long-term objectives, which include the preparation and dissemination of informative and didactic material, and the training of trainers and officials in the executive, legal and judicial branches. The Mexican Government mentions implementation of various programmes in the area of dissemination and application of women's labour rights, which seem to have attained a major degree of institutionalization, resulting in ongoing actions that do not depend on a time-limited project. Thus in the framework of the "National Women's Programme 1995-2000", the Office of the Federal Prosecutor for the Defence of Labour (PROFEDET) has set specific targets for international and provincial offices, in terms of assisting women with advisory and conciliation services, legal representation and medical valuations. The organization of awareness-raising and training events on the role of women in economic development and on their economic and labour rights, seems often to be an important way to attract attention and political interest on specific issues of concern in connection with economic and labour equity.

Table 6

TRAINING ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC AND LABOUR RIGHTS, BY IMPLEMENTING INSTITUTION (SECOND HALF OF 1990s)

Ministry of Labour (or other national organization related to labour policies)	
El Salvador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and dissemination of information on female workers' labour rights (1997 - 1998) • Training courses on occupational safety and hygiene for firms (ongoing activity)
Guatemala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project to promote, disseminate and provide training on women's labour rights and obligations^a
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Federal Prosecutor for the Defence of Labour (PROFEDET): National Women's Programme: advice, conciliation and legal representation for women provided through central offices and provincial prosecutors' offices (1999-ongoing).
Panama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panamanian Institute of Labour Studies; Women workers programme: training and workshops^a
Suriname	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project: Training and information dissemination on women workers' rights (1996 - 1999)
National mechanism for the advancement of women	
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political participation programme: implementation and monitoring of the quota law (1993-ongoing). • Programme to construct a new citizenry in law and in practice (1994-98; restructured in 2000).
Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops with women from different sectors (agriculture, communications, health, education, light industry, transport, domestic commerce, science and technology, fishing, construction, food industry, tourism, radio and television, culture): implemented jointly by sectoral ministries and unions (since the 1990s).
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities to disseminate labour rights^a
El Salvador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme to disseminate women's rights, implemented through radio, newspapers, television, posters and pamphlets (in cooperation with the Ministries of the Interior and Education) (1998-ongoing).
Guatemala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and legal reforms project (1996 - 2000) • Multilateral training project in gender and development for rural women leaders (2000)
Panama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and dissemination programme on women's labour rights (1996 – 1997)
Paraguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific projects on gender awareness for women in government departments^a
Dominican Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's rights programme^a • Training programme on gender and development issues for rural women leaders^a
Uruguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme: Women's Rights and Family Information Centres: Workshops on labour rights^a

Sources: ECLAC, on the basis of published information and that provided by governments in the 1999 and 2000 survey; Directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.1065/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 1998

^a No data available on period of implementation or operation.

International cooperation, specifically from ILO, continues to play a key role in publicizing and promoting training on the national legislation and international labour standards most relevant to gender equity in employment that have been ratified by the countries.

D. Programmes and projects

How do the commitments assumed by governments and sectoral ministries with regard to gender equity in economic and labour development translate into actual programme and project implementation? This study draws together information on programmes and projects mentioned by ministries as important activities in moving towards these commitments. As far as possible it distinguishes between programmes coordinated by the various sectoral ministries and those implemented by mechanisms for the advancement of women. From the gender mainstreaming standpoint, a programme promoted by a sectoral ministry and financed with a regular sectoral budget, which has explicitly incorporated a gender perspective, is worth more in terms of "gender mainstreaming" than, say, a programme executed by a women's office, aimed at a specific group of women workers, financed by international cooperation and with no linkages to national policies and programmes in the economic and labour domains.

The information made available through this initial survey is neither qualitatively nor quantitatively sufficient to allow this type of assessment. Nonetheless, it does allow us to point up trends to be corroborated through more specific and qualitative studies.

Nearly all the national mechanisms for the advancement of women that submitted information in response to the ECLAC request, mentioned programmes or projects being implemented to improve gender equity in the labour and economic domains. They describe programmes coordinated by the institution itself, along with projects executed by other ministries or public bodies, mainly labour and agriculture ministries, and professional training and statistical institutions. Some of the labour ministries that replied to our initial request for information (in 1999), provide information not only on programmes within their institution but also on those carried out or coordinated by national mechanisms for the advancement of women. This could indicate some degree of mainstreaming and interinstitutional cooperation in promoting equal opportunities in employment.²⁷

The situation represented by ministries or secretariats of economic affairs, finance, industry or commerce is very different. These, in their replies, mentioned the absence — or exceptionally, the presence — of programmes within their institution, but in general they do not report on programmes operated by national mechanisms for the advancement of women. The only exception to this was the Vice Ministry of Industry and Internal Commerce in Bolivia, which mentioned two programmes implemented in coordination with the Office of the Under-Secretary of Gender Issues, Generational Affairs and Family.

We have classified the existing programmes and projects in three areas of intervention that are recurrent in the region: labour training and participation; business and productive development, and agricultural and rural development.²⁸

1. Labour training and participation

In most of the countries of the region, national professional training programmes have received considerable attention and major funding over the last decade, given the new human resource capacity and quality requirements generated by increasingly demanding and competitive labour and product markets. In addition to a training component, many of these programmes include activities related to labour market orientation and participation. As can be seen in table 7, the executors of such programmes are basically labour ministries, although other bodies are also mentioned as implementing this type of programme in the region, including national professional training institutes (El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru) and other national institutions such as the Municipal Development Institute in Paraguay. In Chile, Cuba and Honduras, mechanisms for the advancement of women claim to be the coordinators of programmes or projects in this area.

Several countries mention national human resource formation programmes that cater significantly to the needs of women. These include Brazil which listed the “*Plano Nacional de Qualificação do Trabalhador (PLANFOR)*”, “*Programa Comunidades Solidárias*” and “*Programa de Renda Mínima*”; the last two of which are inter-sectoral anti-poverty programmes that include raising the supply of professional training for women workers. The PLANFOR programme, financed by *Fundo de Amparo ao Trabalhador*, is a good example of a major national programme, conceived as a strategy for developing a public policy on professional training that explicitly attempts to include a gender perspective in its objectives and actions, rather than a mass professional training programme.

Incorporating this dimension of human resource diversity is seen as fundamental in building a new professional training model that is both equitable and efficient.²⁹ Argentina cites its community

²⁷ This was true of the replies submitted by the ministries of labour in Argentina, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

²⁸ Programs relating to the generation and analysis of economic and labour-market data, dissemination and training in economic and labour rights, and institutional capacity strengthening are dealt with in specific chapters on these issues.

²⁹ See Ministério do Trabalho e Emprego Brasil (2000), PLANFOR – Plano Nacional de Qualificação do Trabalhador. Diversidade e Igualdade de Oportunidades: Qualificação Profissional na Perspectiva de Gênero, Secretaria de Políticas Públicas de Emprego, Departamento de Qualificação Profissional, Fundo de Amparo ao Trabalhador, Brasília, September 2000.

services programme (*Programa Servicios Comunitarios*) — now in its third phase of implementation — which provides temporary employment in community service for unemployed workers, and since 1999 has included a major non-traditional training component for women. A requirement of the programme is that 90% of the beneficiaries be women.

Other cases include programmes specifically aimed at improving the supply of professional training for women, such as the training program on equal opportunities, non-traditional jobs and gender identity, run by the National Technical Institute in Nicaragua. In a programme financed by the European Union, the Women’s Office of the National Institute of Professional Training (INAFORP) in Panama is running activities to provide training for its liaison units in the various provinces, while also promoting courses in non-traditional trades.

The vast majority of “targeted” programmes are preferentially aimed at *low-income women and young people*. The labour-market empowerment programme for low-income women, especially heads of households, run by SERNAM in Chile, is a benchmark in the region. Other countries that report the existence of professional training programmes for poor women are Argentina,³⁰ Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay. Professional training programmes targeting young people were reported among others by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Argentina, which mentions its *Proyecto Joven*, a productive retraining support programme including skill training and practical experience in firms where 40% of the beneficiaries are women. Peru mentions the *Pro Joven* youth labour training programme of the Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion, which has implemented a policy to encourage female labour-market participation. In its first year of operations (1999) 54% of all beneficiaries were women. The governments of Honduras, Uruguay and Paraguay also report training programmes for young women.

Given the significance of women’s double-length working day and the need for the State to value and provide structural support for so-called reproductive work, it is worth mentioning programmes or projects to alleviate the burden of domestic work aimed at facilitating labour market participation and economic autonomy for women. The Government of Peru reports the national *WaWa Wasi* programme, a technical agency responsible for promoting, directing, executing and monitoring actions to provide day-care services for the children of working mothers. In its report on compliance with actions of the National Women’s Policy 1998, El Salvador cites 15 projects designed to ease the domestic burden for rural women, but the extent to which these have subsequently been implemented is not clear. Reconciling productive work with family responsibilities is an aim of several national and sectoral equal opportunity plans, so it would be worth studying the degree to which programmes and projects incorporate procedures, strategies and activities aimed at achieving this objective.

Table 7

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS RELATED TO GENDER EQUITY IN LABOUR TRAINING AND PARTICIPATION, ACCORDING TO IMPLEMENTING INSTITUTION (SECOND HALF OF 1990s)

Ministry of Labour	
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Programa FORMUJER</i>: strengthening of technical and professional training for low-income women (2000-2003) • <i>Programa Servicios Comunitarios I, II, III</i>: temporary employment for unemployed male or female workers in community service (1996-1999) • Community development subprogramme of the Emergency Employment Programme (2000)
Dominica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education skills training (1995-1997): geared at empowerment for women towards personal development and self-employment
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment project for female heads of low-income households, in the programme “Defence and promotion of employment and human resource development”^a
El Salvador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Proyecto Maquila</i>: improving female employment conditions in the maquila industry^a • Support for labour- market participation by disabled women • Private enterprise recreational project aimed at female workers and their children in the departments of San Salvador, La Libertad and Santa Ana^a
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme: “More and better jobs for women in Mexico (1998 - 2001)”

³⁰ The Government of Argentina refers to the “Regional program to strengthen technical and professional training for low-income women,” a regional program sponsored by IDB-CINTERFOR/ILO which is also being implemented in Bolivia and Costa Rica.

Paraguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour training and skilling program ^a • <i>Proyecto Las Jóvenes y el Trabajo Creativo</i>: craftwork and artistic training aimed at labour market re-entry for women prisoners ^a
Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female employment consolidation program (PROFECE): aimed at low-income women (since 1999) • <i>Sistema Nacional de Colocaciones PROEMPLEO</i>: employment programme for women in non-traditional occupations (since 1998) • <i>Programa de Capacitación Laboral Juvenil – ProJoven</i>: a policy to promote female labour-market participation (since 1999)
Uruguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job retraining programme: 53% of the beneficiaries are women (1993-1999) • Job training and labour market entry programme for young people; specially addressing the needs of women and heads of family ^a • Training projects aimed mainly at rural women and youth (PROCAPRO)^a • Programme to promote equal opportunities for women in employment and job training (execution approved, but subject to financing difficulties) of the Labour Retraining Fund run by the National Employment Board.
National mechanism for the advancement of women	
Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour market empowerment programme for low-income women, especially heads of household (enrollments up to 2001) • Seasonal women workers programme ^a
Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of specialized classes in languages and computing, in order to expand training for employment for women ^a • Course in bicycle repair, skills training for female employment ^a
Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme to support adolescent girls, run in coordination with the National Professional training Institute ^a
Other executing agencies	
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Plano Nacional de Qualificação do Trabalhador</i> – PLANFOR (1995 - ongoing) • <i>Programa Comunidades Solidárias</i>: includes increasing the supply of professional training for female workers (1995) • <i>Programa de Renda Mínima</i>: includes programmes to update professional training
El Salvador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salvadoran Professional Training Institute (INSAFORP): project on centres accredited by INSAFORP; major incorporation of gender perspective (since 1998)
Nicaragua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Technological Institute: training programme in equal opportunities for non-traditional jobs^a
Panama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Professional Training Institute: training for liaison units, radio and television programmes, awareness-raising campaigns and courses in non-traditional trades ^a
Paraguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Development Institute: programme to support training in community work for women ^a
Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Literacy Program^a • <i>Programa Wawa Wasi</i>: day-care services for children of working mothers ^a

Sources: ECLAC, on the basis of published information and that provided by governments in the 1999 and 2000 survey; Directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.1065/Rev. 1), Santiago, Chile, 1998

^a No data available on period of implementation or operation.

There are two programmes in the employment area that appear to have multiple goals and strategies, targeting certain categories of female worker. One of these is the “More and Better Jobs for Women” programme in Mexico, targeting women workers in the maquila industry in the state of Coahuila and women micro-entrepreneurs in the urban informal sector in the state of Guerrero. El Salvador also reports a project to improve the labour situation of women working in the maquila industry.³¹ Both projects are supported by ILO and combine goals of institutional strengthening, information generation with a gender perspective, dissemination and training, and the design of public policy proposals.

Lastly, it is interesting to note that the Government of El Salvador reports a programme to improve access to recreation for women workers. Although free time and recreation is not a priority issue on the government agenda, it is known to have a strong gender bias, since women, as a result of their double — and sometimes triple — working day, compounded by lesser social and economic autonomy, generally have less access to time and space for recreation; this is negative for their health and well-being.

³¹ This forms part of a regional project that is being implemented simultaneously in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

The diversity of these programmes and projects is considerable, and it would need a more qualitative study to investigate their approaches, scope and capacity to promote gender mainstreaming in labour-market training and participation policies. Nonetheless, it is notable that the attention paid by the State to the labour situation of women, is often closely related to the fight against poverty, considering the growing economic responsibility of women with respect to their families. In the effort to reduce levels of indigence and poverty, governments in the region seem to be gradually building a gender perspective into programmes and projects aimed at improving the labour-market participation of poor and most vulnerable women, with an emphasis on increasing technical and professional training.

2. Business and commercial development

A significant number of the programmes and projects to improve the economic autonomy of women involve supporting microenterprise and small businesses in the region, through training programmes or access to credit and productive resources. Several of these target women and men alike, increasingly paying special attention to the disadvantaged situation (greater exclusion) of women micro-entrepreneurs in terms of access to information, training, credit, new technologies, marketing networks, etc. Such is the case of programmes mentioned by the governments of Brazil, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay and Peru, among others (see table 8). The Ministry of Industry and Trade in Paraguay cites the handicrafts promotion service, which will benefit women proportionately more as they account for 80% of the country's craftworkers. The Peruvian Government mentions several programmes in this area, such as the Commission for the Formalization of Property Ownership, the Microenterprise Development Fund, and actions carried out by the Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Integration and International Negotiations (MITINCO), highlighting the percentage of women beneficiaries and indicating that a gender policy is being promoted in these programmes.

The fact that microenterprise development programmes also cater for women, does not necessarily mean they apply targeted and corrective measures to break down exclusion and discrimination mechanisms, as would be the case with a programme that incorporates a gender perspective in a structural manner. This comes through clearly, for example, in the reply submitted by one economy ministry — referring to a national microenterprise and small business development programme — which stated that the programme “works with gender equity” but “does not contain any type of exclusive mechanism to help strengthen the promotion of gender equity in the activities it carries out (...)”. Some of the programmes and projects mentioned do target women entrepreneurs exclusively, however. *Nacional Financiera* of Mexico, for example, has the “Women entrepreneurs-women producers” programme among its global microenterprise development activities, which has the explicit aim of gender mainstreaming in all initiatives. The Vice Ministry of Industry and Internal Commerce in Bolivia is implementing a programme of action for women in productive small businesses and microenterprises in the module “Strengthening of business and technological management of microenterprises and small businesses), with a loan from IDB.

Table 8

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS RELATED TO GENDER EQUITY IN BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, ACCORDING TO IMPLEMENTING AGENCY (SECOND HALF OF 1990s)

Ministry of Economic Development, Industry or Commerce	
Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vice Ministry of Industry and Internal Commerce: Action programme for women in productive microenterprises and small businesses (2000)
Guatemala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Economic Affairs: National microenterprise and small business development programme
Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Industry and Trade: Rehabilitation of 40 SMEs from one of the markets in the capital where 30% of owners are women ^a ▪ Ministry of Industry and Trade: Reconstruction of food outlet booths owned by women ^a ▪ Ministry of Industry and Trade: Foreign-trade promotion project, formulated with a gender perspective and agreed with women's NGOs carrying out productive activities with export potential ^a

Paraguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Industry and Trade (in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour and Justice and the Women's Bureau): System of training bonds for microenterprise^a ▪ Ministry of Industry and Trade: Handicraft promotion service (80% of craftworkers in Paraguay are women)
Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Integration and International Trade Negotiations: Set of business sector support programmes in which a gender policy is being promoted^a
National mechanism for the advancement of women	
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Global credit programme for microenterprise and small businesses: Training programme (1994 -1997)
Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local projects aimed at the small-scale marble stone industry
Dominica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ European Union STABEX programme: Project skills training and microenterprise development (1995 - ongoing): geared at uplifting the socioeconomic status of rural women
Haiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Credit project for women from poor neighbourhoods in the capital^a
Paraguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women and production project: broom factory^a ▪ Household orchard support project^a
Other executing agencies	
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Programa de Geração de Emprego e Renda</i> (1995): access to credit for small-scale producers ▪ <i>Programa Carta de Crédito</i>: women received one-third of financing provided between 1996 and 1998
Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Productive programmes in Pinar del Río, Ciudad Habana and Granma
Dominica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Credit Programmes: soft loans extended through funding agencies (increasing numbers of women accessing funds for economic activity)^a ▪ Poverty alleviation programme: empowerment for the most vulnerable^a
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Nacional Financiera</i> programme: "Women entrepreneurs-women producers"; part of the Global Programme for Microenterprise Development (2000)
Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Microenterprise Development Fund (FONDEMI): 40% of beneficiaries have been women ▪ MIBANCO: Microfinance institution: portfolio of 22,456 women (30/06/1999) ▪ Property Formalization Commission (COFOPRI) — urban area: upholds principle of equality in granting title ▪ Natural resource management project for poverty relief in mountain areas: supports business initiatives by women^a ▪ INIA: Technified risk project for sustained vegetable production, targeting eight mothers' clubs in the Department of Ayacucho^a

Sources: ECLAC, on the basis of published information and that provided by governments in the 1999 and 2000 survey; Directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.1065/Rev. 1), Santiago, Chile, 1998.

^a No data available on period of implementation or operation.

Generally speaking, the programmes and projects mentioned in the business development chapter also contain a component for extending or providing access to credit. The Government of Argentina ran a Global credit programme for microenterprises and small businesses between 1994 and 1997, which was linked to a microenterprise and small business training and management programme. There are also some programmes specifically centred on granting loans in which governments stress the presence of women as beneficiaries. The Government of Brazil cites the "*Programa de Geração de Emprego e Renda*", which since 1995 has worked to improve access to credit for small-scale producers (independents and cooperatives) with funding from "*Fundo de Amparo ao Trabalhador (FAT)*". In the programme "*Programa Carta de Crédito*", financed and coordinated by "*Fundo de Garantia por Tempo de Serviço*", women were the beneficiaries of one-third of all funding extended between January 1996 and February 1998. Peru mentions the existence of MIBANCA, a microfinance institution that has a significant number of women customers.³²

Some of the productive projects mentioned above are of local scope, ranging from the cultivation of basic food products, to the organization of small-scale industries or small commercial businesses in either rural or urban areas. Sometimes programmes tend to be welfare based and do not appear to incorporate gender mainstreaming strategies in a structural way.

Two countries reported a programme or project linked to business development without an explicit microenterprise focus. The foreign trade promotion project run by the Ministry of Industry and Trade in Honduras is "designed with a gender perspective and agreed with women's NGOs engaged in

³² It reports a portfolio of 22,456 women clients as of 30 June 1999. Unfortunately it does not state the number of male clients on the same date, which would have made it possible to assess the true significance of this figure.

productive activities with export potential”; and the Government of Peru mentions that, among its lines of action, the Ministry of Industry Tourism Integration and International Trade Negotiations (MITNICI) “is developing a set of support programmes for the business sector, which promote a gender policy aimed at equality of opportunities for men and women engaged in business activity.”

Table 8 shows that most of these programmes and projects are implemented by ministries or national institutions connected with economic and (micro-) enterprise development, small-scale industry and domestic commerce. However, in some cases the mechanism for the advancement of women is either actively involved in national programmes or directly implements productive microprojects of local scope.

3. Agricultural development and rural work

Rural development and agrarian reform is another area showing increasing evidence of the differential status between women and men, where there are some interesting experiences of gender mainstreaming in national programmes executed by ministries or other relevant institutions (see table 9). The Ministry of Agriculture in Argentina mentions the “Rural development programme of north-east Argentina”, which among other things extends credit and technical support to rural workers of both sexes. The Agriculture and Livestock Ministry in Paraguay is implementing, in conjunction with the Women’s Bureau, an interinstitutional programme entitled “Agricultural empowerment credit”, which includes a technical assistance component for rural women. Other programmes, mentioned by the governments of Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Saint Kitts and Nevis, focus exclusively on enhancing the situation of rural women.

There are also some agrarian reform programmes and projects that advocate for land titling in women’s names. The Government of Brazil states that in its agrarian reform programme, one quarter of the 180,000 families that received parcels of land were headed by women. In the federal and state government programmes “*Habitar*” and “*Brasil Pró Moradia*”, directives were prepared to encourage granting ownership titles directly to women. The Government of Cuba reports that since 1997, the Ministry of Agriculture has been making land available for beneficial use by peasant women, and 6,800 women had taken advantage of this by the end of 1999. The land titling project (PETT) in Peru also recognizes equality of access to ownership between women and men.

Table 9

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS RELATED TO GENDER EQUITY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT, BY IMPLEMENTING AGENCY (SECOND HALF OF 1990s)

Ministry or National Institute of Agriculture	
Argentina	▪ Rural development programme of North-East Argentina (PRODERNEA): credit and technical support
Cuba	▪ Provision of land for beneficial use by peasant women (since 1997)
Ecuador	▪ Programme for the comprehensive advancement of peasant women ^a
Mexico	▪ Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development: Women in rural development programme
	▪ Agrarian Reform Secretariat: Peasant women's programme ^a
Paraguay	▪ Agricultural empowerment credit. Interinstitutional programme in conjunction with the Women's Bureau: technical assistance and credit for rural women. ^a
Peru	▪ Land titling project (PETT) – rural area: recognizes equality of access to ownership between women and men
National mechanism for the advancement of women	
Cuba	▪ Development of amaranth cultivation for food purposes ^a
	▪ Soybean production for human consumption ^a
Nicaragua	▪ Rural women's project ^a
St. Kitts and Nevis	▪ Agricultural project for rural women ^a
Other executing agencies	
Brazil	▪ Agrarian reform programme: land parcels provided to a quarter of families headed by women ^a
	▪ Programmes <i>Habitar - Brasil Pró Moradia</i> : directives to encourage granting of ownership titles in women's names ^a
Cuba	▪ Dairy development and food production in the provinces of Granma and Las Tunas ^a
	▪ Agricultural microprojects of local impact ^a
Dominica	▪ Dominican rural enterprise project: Telefood project ^a and agricultural diversification programmes ^a
Ecuador	▪ Ecuadorian Institute of Forestry, Natural Areas and Wildlife (started in 1997)
Peru	▪ PROCHALATE: 15 projects drawn up to ease the domestic burden for rural women

Sources: ECLAC, on the basis of published information and that provided by governments in the 1999 and 2000 survey; Directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.1065/Rev. 1), Santiago, Chile, 1998

^a No data available on period of implementation or operation.

The information that is available does not enable us to identify the priority intervention areas in most of the projects mentioned. One gets the impression that rural development programmes and projects also use a wide variety of approaches and strategies to promote gender equity. While some seem to pursue more structural and transversal strategies, others have more of a welfare bias. There is also great diversity in terms of geographic scope and impact, ranging from national programmes to local microprojects.

E. Technical Resources

This section summarizes information provided by the governments regarding instruments that have been used in the countries of the region to strengthen the process of gender mainstreaming in public policies, especially economic and labour policies. Despite the diversity of the resources mentioned by the governments, they can be placed in two major thematic categories: generation and use of gender statistics and indicators, on the one hand, and, on the other, building institutional capacity to implement public policies with a gender perspective, emphasizing training of officials and raising awareness among the general public. It should be clarified that the “technical resources” discussed here might also be identified as products or results of prior actions and processes aimed at promoting gender equity in the work of the public sector and, therefore, in the country. The publication of a statistical annex on unpaid domestic labour, for example, is both the result of specific actions and efforts and also a valuable source of information for redirecting and targeting public policies and programmes more efficiently. The term “resources” has been selected in order to underscore the dynamic nature of the process of gender mainstreaming.

1. Gender indicators

Access to and use of sex-disaggregated statistics and databases on topics of special interest for working women are essential in order to further the institutionalization of the gender perspective in public policies. Such data serve two purposes: (1) they provide a picture of the real situation of women—in comparison with that of men—in the economy and society that is useful for educational and scientific purposes and to sensitize the general public; and (2) they provide concise indicators for the analysis and monitoring of public policies from a gender perspective. This implies not only that the data - disaggregated by sex - are available, but also that they are considered important enough to warrant proper analysis. In addition, information and analysis documents need to be widely disseminated among the various stakeholders and used as important resources for instigating and sustaining debates so that gender issues are incorporated as matters of concern and consensus on public agendas.

The Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Woman (Beijing, 1995) included several recommendations on the collection of gender statistics and indicators, including one concerning the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data on various aspects of economic activity that would fully reflect the contribution of women and men to the development of their countries and the benefits accruing to them as a result.³³ The importance of having pertinent gender databases and indicators is recognized by the national women's offices in the region. The ministers or highest-ranking authorities responsible for the advancement of women in the Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted, at their first meeting held in Washington, D.C., in April 2000, a resolution on "Integrating the Gender Perspective in the Summits of the Americas," operative paragraph 7 of which recommends "the use of the Gender Indicator System, which was first used within the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), as one of the strategies for following up on the commitments of the Summits of the Americas." (OAS, 2000:33). As noted above, the national plans for equality of opportunities for women and men formulated by various countries of the region also identify objectives and actions related to the collection of gender statistics and indicators, research and analysis of data, and dissemination of information. In addition, most of the plans call for monitoring and evaluation of the policies implemented and point up the need to develop measurement instruments and indicators for that purpose.

An initial requirement for the development of such indicators is to gather and disseminate reliable, comparable and periodic statistical data, disaggregated by sex, in the areas of interest.³⁴ In response to queries concerning the availability of official sex-disaggregated statistics on economic and labour issues, the Governments of Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Peru and Uruguay note the existence of different databases within the national statistics offices that produce information on topics related to population, employment and agriculture. The Government of El Salvador indicates that the National Centre for Agricultural and Forest Technology of the Ministry of Agriculture has all its information disaggregated by sex, and the Dominican Republic reports the existence of several surveys conducted by other government agencies—including the Institute of Population and Development Studies, the Central Bank and the National Office for Personnel Administration—which disaggregate their information by sex. Other governments mention several additional initiatives. Chile, for example, points out that, in 1997, gender indicators were incorporated into its Fourth National Agricultural Census. El Salvador reports that the Directorate for Agricultural Economics within its Ministry of Agriculture plans to conduct a survey of poultry breeders with a gender perspective. Peru indicates that its Superintendency of Banking and Insurance is also developing a database with a gender perspective.

Four countries in the region report that they have a special information system that collects data on the situation of woman in comparison with that of men in several areas of interest. Argentina has

³³ Platform for Action, Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995, A/Conf. 177/20, para. 62(a) and para. 206(e).

³⁴ Clearly, the quality of data collected "with a gender perspective" is closely related to the quality of statistical data in general. Significant gaps in this area are known to exist in the region. Not only do some official databases continue not to collect or publish disaggregated information, but the various databases that exist are not always comparable at the national level. Moreover, records are incomplete; there are serious coverage problems, which leads to a lack of information on rural areas; and there are problems with comparability over time because surveys are not conducted on a regular basis.

incorporated the National Information System on Women (1999-2000) as a component of its Federal Plan for Women. Chile has a statistical database on women (1998). In 1997, Ecuador implemented a database on the situation of women (SIMUJER), which complements the Integrated System of Social Indicators for Ecuador (SIISE), created in 1996. In Mexico, the National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics (INEGI) created, in 1995, a set of indicators with a gender perspective that was subsequently incorporated into the System of Indicators for Monitoring the Situation of Woman in Mexico (SISESIM), created in 1997.

In response to the interest expressed by the member countries elected as Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Woman in Latin America and the Caribbean in having precise instruments to identify progress and setbacks in the advancement of women in the countries of the region, ECLAC developed a set of indicators based on the measures recommended by the governments in the Beijing Platform for Action, the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, and the Plan of Action of the Second Summit of the Americas. In the area of women and poverty, four indicators are proposed which are directly related to measuring the productive capacity of women in terms of access to financial, technical and productive resources. In the area of women and the economy, the 16 proposed indicators measure, inter alia, gender differences in wages, access to occupations dominated by the opposite sex, gender differences in the unstructured sector, differential access to credit and training, access to and coverage of childcare services, and contribution of the family economy to GDP.

A year after disseminating this proposal, the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC undertook a preliminary study of the availability of gender indicators in the countries of the region, based on 17 national reports drafted by the governments as part of their preparations for the Beijing +5 conference, as well as special studies on the situation of women carried out by Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay. The indicators most frequently used by the countries with regard to gender equity in the economic and labour spheres are related to women's status as heads of household (as an indicator associated with poverty), rates of economic participation and unemployment by sex.

With regard to the indicators proposed by ECLAC, those that have been most widely used are those that have to do with gender gaps in ownership of farmland, legal remedies against sex-based discrimination in the workplace, access to occupations dominated by the opposite sex, and differential access to credit. It is clear that there is much less information available on the situation of male and female workers who are self-employed or work in the informal sector and on the budgetary amounts that the governments allocate to benefit female workers in that sector. As for differential access to training for women and men, only 4 countries (out of the sample of 17) mentioned any related indicators, which is noteworthy given the importance of professional training programmes in the region.

Two issues that seem to be gaining in importance in the region are, one, women's access to specialized jobs and positions of authority and, two, the rights of women—or parents in general—to childcare services. Indicators of the coverage of these services, the contribution of the family economy to GDP, the differential total workload of men and women and the sexual division of labour (especially with regard to “reproductive” work) are still virtually non-existent in the region. Moreover, only 2 of the 17 countries mention any indicators relating to changes in gender patterns in employment.

Several governments in the region allude to the existence of interinstitutional mechanisms to facilitate the coordination of actions and programmes related to the collection and production of information from a gender perspective (see Table A.5 in Annex, p. 72). Such mechanisms exist in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru, among other countries. Information is not available on participation on these committees by ministries of labour, economy and finance, commerce, or planning, but it appears that interinstitutional collaboration for the generation of gender statistics and indicators on the economic and labour situation generally occurs between the national entity or institution for the advancement of women and the national statistics institutes. Information on the development of interinstitutional agreements for the generation of statistics and information with a

gender perspective is available from the following countries: Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, and Venezuela. In all these cases, the collaboration agreements have been established between the national entity for the advancement of women and the national statistics institute. In Mexico, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has also signed an agreement with INEGI for the development of a statistical profile of rural women.

Some countries of the region report the existence of more structured programmes to improve the collection, interpretation and dissemination of data and statistics that give due attention to the differential situation of women and men. In general, collection and interpretation of labour and economic data is an integral part of the work of these programmes (see Table 10). In some cases, they are programmes overseen by the entities for the advancement of women in close collaboration with the national statistics institute.

Table 10

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS RELATED TO INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC AND LABOUR ISSUES WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE, BY EXECUTING INSTITUTION (SECOND HALF OF THE 1990s)

National institution for the advancement of women	
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot Programme of the Federal Plan for Women: National Information System on Women (SNIM) and participatory assessment in the provinces (1998-1999)
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Information System Project in collaboration with the Management Section of the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management^a
Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study on the participation of women in the industrial sector, concluding with the formulation of proposals to the Forum for Productive Development and the Ministry of Economy (1997-1998)
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIMUJER, information system on the situation of women, associated with the Integrated System for Social Indicators of Ecuador (SIISE) (1997)
Haiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey on the situation of women heads of household vis-à-vis public administration^a
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System of Indicators for Monitoring the Situation of Women (SISESIM), in collaboration with INEGI (1997 to date)
Panama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender statistics in conjunction with the National Statistics and Census Institute^a
Trinidad and Tobago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical cooperation project for the improvement of programme planning, coordination and management; establishment of a WID information system; gender analysis^a
Other executing institution	
Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Undersecretary of Mines and Metallurgy: 2 research consultancies on women living in extreme poverty in the framework of the programme "Reactivation of Western Bolivia"^a
El Salvador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Labour: Assessment of the factors that limit or facilitate the participation of women in professional training programmes (1998)
Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare: institutional assessment in the formal sector of the central district: study of a sample of 19 businesses (1995 – 1996) • Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare: Study of 152 maquiladoras in the northern region of the country^a
Nicaragua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Finance and Public Credit: More in-depth study of gender in civil service^a

Source: - ECLAC, based on the available information provided by the governments in the framework of the survey for 1999 and 2000.

- Directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.1065/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 1998.

^a Data not available on the period in which the initiative was implemented or operational

Mexico is probably one of the countries in the region that has worked most systematically with the issue of gender statistics and indicators. Although INEGI had already carried out several activities in this area during the early 1990s—including the creation of the National Office for the Coordination of Gender Studies in 1993 and the Bank of Gender Indicators in 1995—in 1997, together with CONMUJER, it launched the project "System of Indicators for Monitoring the Situation of the Women (SISESIM)." Among other accomplishments, a module on "work, time use and contributions" was

designed and applied in the National Survey of Household Income and Expenditure, to be conducted regularly beginning in 1998. In addition, the Institute has reprocessed information from some sources in order to derive gender statistics and propose modification to the questionnaires used in the monthly industrial survey, the monthly survey on commercial establishments and the survey of the maquiladora export industry.

Panama reports that the processing of gender statistics and information is done in collaboration with the National Statistics and Census Institute, with support from international technical cooperation agencies. In Brazil, the National Council on the Rights of Women (CNDM) is carrying out, together with the Management Section of the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management, the project "Gender Information System," whose purpose is to collect statistical data, compile existing legislation and promote the coordination and dissemination of studies and research.³⁵ The national office for women of the Dominican Republic notes that training activities have been offered for the technical staff of the National Statistics Office (ONE) in the use of census indicators that measure the contribution of women to development.

A number of more specific initiatives are also being carried out in the area of information collection, both by national institutions for the advancement of women and sectoral ministries through participatory studies and assessments. Such initiatives were reported by the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua. SERNAM of Chile, for example, undertook a study on the participation of women in the industrial sector, based on a UNIDO project that concluded with the presentation of proposals to the Forum for Productive Development and the Ministry of Economy.

In order for gender equity issues to become matters of political interest and concern, they must be appropriated by the various stakeholders in society. This means raising the visibility of the phenomenon of lack of equity between women and men so that stakeholders will perceive it as an "area for intervention" and propose changes and modifications. In this process of political sensitization and action, the importance of widely disseminating and utilizing the information produced cannot be overemphasized. Government agencies' publication of reports on the situation of women and men in the economic and labour domains, based on national statistics and additional sources of more qualitative information, is only one way of gauging the extent to which such information is attracting public interest in a country.

The ECLAC survey examined to what degree state institutions have published, since 1995, studies and analyses on gender equity in economic and labour development.³⁶ In all, eleven countries listed one or several publications, most of which had been produced by the national offices for women. A review of the titles of these publications suggests several conclusions.

First, several countries mention documents that seem to present a general overview of what is occurring in terms of gender in the country (e.g., Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Guatemala and Uruguay). Other publications are directly related to the development of gender indicators and, in some cases, their use for the formulation of public policies, but they do not focus exclusively on economic or labour matters (e.g., Argentina, Dominican Republic, Ecuador).

The situation of women in the labour market and issues related to women's growing participation in paid work have been the subject of several publications mentioned by the countries. Information is available, for example, about documents on these topics published by the National Council on Women (CNM) and the Undersecretariat for Women of the Ministry of External Relations of Argentina, the

³⁵ See the report on the activities carried out by Brazil in relation to gender during the period between January and August 2000, presented by the President of the CNDM to the 31st Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, 13-15 September 2000.

³⁶ Governments were asked to list the publications generated by state agencies on these topics since 1996. In several cases, the countries included publications on other issues related to gender equity (domestic violence, reproductive health and others), which fell outside the scope of this analysis and were not included for methodological reasons.

(former) Undersecretariat for Gender Issues of Bolivia, SERNAM of Chile, CONAMU of Ecuador and INEGI of Mexico. In the area of “gender and economics,” several publications deal with the issue of poverty. Bolivia, Ecuador and Mexico also mention publications on emerging topics such as accounting for unpaid domestic labour and gender differences in contributions to the home and time use.

It is noteworthy that no information has been received on publications by state institutions on topics related to trade and macroeconomic policies and their effects in terms of gender equity. It is equally interesting that no reference is made to publications produced by the national offices for women, and only in a few cases were publications by the offices responsible for collection and analysis of statistics mentioned—one notable example being INEGI in Mexico. ECLAC received no information on publications on gender equity produced by ministries dealing with economic, labour or trade matters. This does not necessarily mean that they do not exist, but the fact that they are not mentioned by these sectoral ministries indicates that the process of mainstreaming and institutionalizing the gender perspective intersectorally in public policy remains incipient and fragile.

2. Gender sensitization activities and resources

As Table 11 shows, some countries mention projects whose primary objective is to mainstream the gender perspective in all facets of public policy-making. Insufficient data are available to reveal the main areas or strategies of intervention of these projects or the degree of attention given to labour and economic policies. Still, the mere fact that a country’s ministry of labour reports the existence of such a project may indicate that the gender perspective is being reflected to a certain extent in labour policies. Such is the case in Argentina, for example, where the Ministry of Labour and Social Security mentions a project for mainstreaming the gender perspective, coordinated by the National Council of Women with a loan from the IDB, the aim of which is to carry out the Federal Plan for Women, 1999-2000. Hence, it can be expected that these national programmes for the promotion of equality of opportunities in public affairs or civil service, implemented by agencies for the advancement of women in coordination with sectoral ministries, will have some impact on the work of the sectoral ministries responsible for the implementation of labour and economic policies. As for the objectives and activities pursued by these programmes, it would appear that they all share at least one component, namely, activities aimed at raising awareness and providing training in the gender perspective.

In Latin America, as in the rest of the world, the initial response to the claim that public services and programmes were too “gender blind”—i.e., oblivious to their differential impact on men and women—was to make an effort to increase technical capacity among public officials and professional staff with regard to gender-related matters. In recent years, there has been a veritable flurry of seminars, sensitization activities and technical workshops on the topic, and numerous national women’s offices in the region have emphasized training for public officials and experts as an important strategy for success in mainstreaming the gender perspective in public policies.

Thus, for example, the National Council on Women in Argentina organized intersectoral gender sensitization workshops and a similar workshop conducted jointly with the IDB in 1998. Specifically in the labour and economic areas, a gathering was organized in 1995 with the European Union on equality of opportunities for women in the labour market and production in the framework of MERCOSUR. Several additional training and technical assistance activities have been held since 1993 to strengthen capacity with regard to women’s issues at the provincial and municipal levels.

The government of Mexico is stressing sensitization and training events as important technical instruments. One example is the Project for Interinstitutional Strengthening in Gender, coordinated by the National Commission on Women, which, has also spearheaded the organization of several conferences on the topic, in addition to a workshop on gender analysis and public policy, conducted jointly with the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit. In the latter, various federal agencies examined the importance of applying the gender perspective in the formulation of public policies and implementation of actions that will help eliminate the inequities between women and men.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS FOR TRAINING PUBLIC OFFICIALS IN THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING IN GENERAL, BY EXECUTING INSTITUTION (SECOND HALF OF THE 1990S)

National institution for the advancement of women	
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project "Mainstreaming the Gender Perspective": Implementation of the Federal Plan for Women, 1999 – 2000 • Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Women's Offices at the Provincial and Municipal Levels (1997 to date)
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Programme for Promotion of Equality of Opportunities in Public Affairs, in conjunction with the Ministry of Public Administration and State Reform (1998 to date)
Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme to train public officials in gender and development issues (funded until 2003)
Dominican Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme "Advancement of Women in the Area of Gender and Development: Dissemination, Sensitization and Training"^a • Programme "Strengthening National Capacity to Carry Out the Beijing Platform"^a • Programme of Institutional Strengthening for the Ministry of Labour^a
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme "Gender Policies for the Year 2000". Priority: Mainstreaming the gender perspective in the area of labour for the generation of employment and income (2000 - 2002). Includes activities to disseminate information about labour rights. • Sensitization and training on women's participation in development (1997 – 1999) • Proposal for the design of a communication plan with the Ministry of Labour and sensitization activities for staff of the Ministry, the sectoral commissions and consensus committees (2000 - 2002)
El Salvador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training workshops on equality of rights and duties for women and men aimed at administrators, inspectors, delegates and administrative staff of the Ministry of Labour (1998 - 1999)
Guatemala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project "Support for Public Policies on Equality of Opportunities"^a • Project "Women in a Context of Equality for the Achievement of Peace, Democracy and Development" (2000 – 2001)
Haiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional strengthening project for the Ministry
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project for institutional strengthening in gender (1998 – 2000)
Panama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme for promotion of equal opportunity (1996 to date)
Paraguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific projects on gender sensitization for women in departmental governments^a • Project "Initiative Centres for the Development of Women (CIDEM)"^a
Other executing institutions	
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Labour and Human Resources: Programme "Muchacho Trabajador": Exchange of practical experiences in gender-related matters^a
Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Industry and Trade: Dissemination of the Declaration of Beijing to all Ministry staff and organization of talks for women who work in its various departments^a • Ministry of Industry and Trade: Participation in developing the proposed draft legislation for the creation of the National Women's Institute^a
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Programme on Women (1998 to date)

Source: - ECLAC, based on the available information provided by the governments in the framework of the survey in 1999 and 2000.

- Directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.1065/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 1998.

^a Data not available on the period in which the initiative was implemented or operational

Other programmes of this nature include the National Programme for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities in Public Affairs, co-executed by the National Council on Women's Rights and the Ministry of Public Administration and State Reform (MARE) in Brazil; the programme for training of public officials in gender and development issues in Chile, which has been funded by the State until 2003; the programme "Strengthening of National Capacity to Carry Out the Beijing Platform" in the Dominican Republic; the programme "Gender Policies for the Year 2000" being carried out by CONAMU in Ecuador; the projects "Support for Public Policies on Equality of Opportunities" and "Women in a Context of Equality for the Achievement of Peace, Democracy and Development" in Guatemala; and the programme "Promotion of Equal Opportunity" in Panama.

In some countries, such as the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago, projects are under way to strengthen the internal capacity for administration, coordination and service delivery of the institution devoted to the advancement of women. Although it is not known whether all of these programmes include

sensitization and training activities, it is reasonable to assume that in all cases, though to varying extents, gender sensitization and training workshops aimed at a broad range of beneficiaries have been carried out.

In addition to the organization of seminars, conferences and workshops on various topics or approaches related to gender theory, manuals and technical guides have been published on the gender perspective and its incorporation into policies and programmes. At the global level, international, governmental and nongovernmental organizations have designed technical guides to meet the need for information on gender theory among their professional staff who are not experts on the subject. These instruments are circulating in the countries and are serving as sources of input and reference for training. They are also being utilized by public agencies.³⁷ In addition, the information available indicates that in the second half of the 1990s government agencies themselves began to produce such materials. Countries that have provided information on the availability of manuals and technical guides prepared by government agencies are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba,³⁸ El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru. The National Women's Department of Belize reports that it is in the process of developing such manuals.

Several types of manuals can be distinguished. The governments report the existence of some guides aimed at mainstreaming gender in programmes and projects in general and others for the application of the gender perspective in specific projects. In relation to the area of interest for this assessment, information has been received on manuals for the incorporation of the gender perspective in projects designed to strengthen businesses and business management, professional training, agricultural development, productive management with respect to the environment and income generation. Another category of manuals seeks to incorporate a gender perspective in training activities per se. Finally, there are technical manuals that are intended to support institutional strengthening processes (see Table 12). They range from guidelines for the creation and strengthening of public entities for the promotion of gender equity at the provincial or municipal levels to the formation of civic associations and organizations of women and the development of participatory community assessments with a gender perspective. The Government of Chile mentions guides to support gender mainstreaming in local offices and programmes that are linked specifically to policies and programmes on employment.

The manuals generally provide conceptual information and background on gender theory, in addition to concrete proposals to guide action. They provide technical guidelines through a set of mainly theoretical readings complemented by practical exercises. These materials are intended for use by public officials in national and local institutions, professional and technical personnel, members of NGOs, leaders and community members involved in projects and programmes.

It is also worth mentioning here that several national offices of women report that they have published and disseminated the various gender-related international conventions and agreements, which is indicative of the importance that these offices attach to such instruments as political support for their efforts to provide technical training on gender issues in the countries. They have also published national plans for the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men, reports on the activities of the women's offices and sectoral ministries with regard to fulfilment of the commitments assumed and documents relating to legal provisions on non-discrimination and gender equity.

Table 12
EXAMPLES OF MANUALS AND GUIDES FOR INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING
(PRODUCED SINCE 1995)

³⁷ The Government of Belize, for example, utilizes manuals developed by UNICEF, PAHO and the Commonwealth Secretariat as technical instruments in the process of mainstreaming the gender perspective in public life.

³⁸ The Government of Cuba did not submit detailed information (with the title and year of publication of the manuals), but it did indicate that, as an outcome of various seminars, manuals and guides on gender are available in several areas of action

Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNM (1995), <i>Organizaciones de mujeres; Guía para formar una asociación civil</i> [Women's Organizations: Guide for Forming a Civic Association] • CNM (1996), <i>Guía y asesoramiento para la creación de la área mujer en el ámbito municipal</i> [Guidelines and Recommendations for Creating a Women's Unit at the Municipal Level] • CNM (1997), <i>Guía y asesoramiento para el cumplimiento de la Ley de Cupo y su decreto reglamentario</i> [Guidelines and Recommendations for Complying with the Quota Law and its Regulatory Decree] • CNM (1998), <i>Igualdad de oportunidades entre varones y mujeres: discusión del concepto y propuestas para el cambio</i> [Equality of Opportunities for Men and Women: Discussion of the Concept and Proposals for Change] • CNM (2000), Manuals for training modules in the framework of the Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Women's Offices at the Provincial and Municipal Levels (including: <i>Perspectiva de género</i> [Gender Perspective]; <i>El estado y las políticas públicas</i> [The State and Public Policy]; <i>Negociación, manejo y resolución de conflictos</i> [Conflict Negotiation, Management and Resolution]; <i>Cabildeo</i> [Lobbying]; <i>Liderazgo</i> [Leadership]; <i>Participación y concertación</i> [Participatory Consensus-building]) • CNM (1996), <i>Argentina. Acción nacional en favor de los derechos de las mujeres trabajadoras</i> [Argentina: National Action to Uphold the Rights of Working Women]
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNDM – The Ministry of Labour is in the process of preparing a manual on the creation of regional and municipal councils on women's rights
Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¹ (1995), <i>Igualdad de oportunidades en la oficina municipal de colocaciones</i> [Equality of Opportunities in the Municipal Placement Office] • ¹ (1995), <i>Igualdad de oportunidades en el empleo municipal</i> [Equality of Opportunities in Municipal Employment] • ¹ (1998), <i>Promoviendo la igualdad de género entre hijos e hijas de temporeras</i> [Promoting Gender Equality between Sons and Daughters of Temporary Workers], a publication aimed at municipal officials and institutions responsible for implementing childcare centres for children of temporary workers
Guatemala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Women's Office (ONAM) – UNDP (1996), <i>Cómo elaborar un diagnóstico comunitario, participativo y con enfoque de género</i> [How to Conduct a Participatory Community Assessment with a Gender Perspective]
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual on the development of basic methodological guidelines for the application of a gender perspective in public policies currently being prepared^{1/a}

Source: - ECLAC, based on the available information provided by the governments in the framework of the survey in 1999 and 2000;

^a Information not available on the date of preparation or publication

¹ Information not available on the institution responsible for preparing the publication

Important instruments for disseminating this information are the magazines or bulletins published by the women's offices in several countries of the region (including Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador and Paraguay). In view of the objective of promoting the gender perspective intersectorally, it would be interesting to ascertain to what extent these topics have been incorporated into bulletins or other materials published by the sectoral ministries and other government agencies responsible for implementing economic and labour policies.

F. Pending issues

1. Financial resources

In preparation for the 32nd Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (New York, June 2000) to appraise progress under the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing +5), various governments of the region have prepared reports on their budgetary allocations for the implementation of the commitments assumed in 1995, including the funds allocated to the national women's offices. A report from UNIFEM (2000) contains several examples from the region of Latin America and the Caribbean. In general, the allocations for programmes aimed at promoting gender equity make up only a small fraction of the total national budget. In Argentina, the allocation amounts to 0.0046% of the total national budget, while in the Dominican Republic it is 0.0020%. In Cuba, Ecuador and El Salvador, the government allocation for women's programmes has increased since 1995. In the cases of Barbados, Chile and Dominica, the budgets for these programmes have remained unchanged.

The allocation of financial resources to public programmes, activities and mechanisms designed to improve gender equity is a very significant indicator for measuring the degree to which the gender perspective is being mainstreamed in public policies. To assess the extent of gender mainstreaming in economic and labour policies, it is necessary to know not only the total amounts budgeted for national women's offices, but also what proportion is devoted to programmes related to gender equity in the labour and economic spheres. At the same time, it is necessary to know what amount is allocated to the sectoral ministries of labour and economic development and the percentage of their total budget that these ministries allocate for the implementation of policies or programmes aimed at enhancing the situation and status of women and thus improving levels of gender equity in their areas of responsibility.

In the ECLAC survey, the countries were asked to indicate the amount of financial resources available to the national offices of women and the ministries of labour and economy for the same reference year. In addition to the total amount, they were requested to indicate the proportion of resources deriving from international cooperation and the budget allocated to programmes on gender, labour and economic development by the government agencies in those three areas.

Very few countries provided any information in this respect, and none provided all the information requested. Nine countries provided information on the total budgets for their national women's offices for a particular reference year (normally 1999 or 2000) and seven of those countries also indicated the amount of resources that comes from international cooperation. Only one country supplied information on the amount allocated by the national women's office to programmes on gender, labour and economic development, but since the amount indicated is higher than the total budget allocated to the office, it is not possible to interpret this information accurately. Only three countries (Belize, Dominica and Ecuador) reported on the total budgets allocated to the ministries of labour and two (Belize and Ecuador) provided information on the budget of the ministry of economy. No countries indicated the amounts that these sectoral ministries allocate to programmes on gender, labour and economic development.

It would appear that public budgets in the region are not yet being formulated with a gender perspective that recognizes that women and men have different privileges and obligations and therefore needs in society. It is important to study this phenomenon in greater depth since, presumably, effective development and evaluation of public policies based on their differential impacts on men and women will be accompanied by heightened interest in allocating state budgets with a gender perspective. In other words, for public policies to be efficient and equitable, the State, and more specifically its sectoral agencies, will have to invest more in those areas (issue areas, geographic areas, etc.) and in those social groups (based on indicators of age, sex, ethnicity, etc.) which studies have shown should be the focus of greater attention because they have been excluded from the benefits of development. Nevertheless, it seems that it is not yet a generalized and institutionalized practice to analyse the incidence of benefits of public expenditure, disaggregated by sex, although the impact of public spending on the population is increasingly being analysed according to other distinguishing variables (for example, ethnicity, geographic location, age). It can certainly be argued, however, that in some cases the impact of policies and budgetary allocations on the population, differentiated by sex, is being analysed. The data from these analyses should be widely disseminated in order to foster citizen knowledge, management and control in the transparent and democratic use and administration of public funds.

2. Political participation and decision-making

The various international and regional conferences that have dealt with the situation and status of women have highlighted the absence of parity and balance in women's representation in formulating the policies implemented in the countries. Equal representation of women and men in decision-making processes is a basic principle of democracy. Although in the 1980s, several countries of Latin America

and the Caribbean instigated processes aimed at restoring democracy and, at the same time, women succeeded in drawing greater attention to gender equity as part of the concern for overall social equity, in general women are still insufficiently represented at almost all levels and in almost all branches of government. Women's access to and participation in the exercise of power in the legislative, judiciary, executive, managerial and planning realms is unquestionably a valuable indicator for appraising the degree to which the objective of gender equity is being actualized in public policies.

A joint analysis undertaken for that purpose by the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC and the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) shows how the traditional stereotypes inherent in the sexual division of labour, which define male and female roles, lead to the predominance of men in political decision-making. This is especially true in areas traditionally perceived as the domain of men, such as economic development and—though to a lesser degree—labour (ECLAC, 1999b). To what extent and in what way are women represented in the public institutions that set economic and labour policies in the countries of the region? This information is important to know, since it provides an indicator of the results obtained from a series of social processes of change and the promotion of women's participation over the years (ECLAC, 1999b:23). When women gained the right to vote and attained full citizenship,³⁹ they also gained access to the institutional political realm, but their entry into that realm did not follow automatically. Indeed, it has varied considerably between countries, and within countries, between the various branches of government and political spheres.

In regard to the executive branch, most of the top ministerial posts that were first occupied by women were in the social area: education, health, social welfare, justice and labour. In 1950, Panama became the first country in the region to name a woman as Minister of Labour, Social Welfare and Public Health. It was followed by Haiti in 1957 (Minister of Labour), Honduras in 1967 (Labour and Social Welfare) and Bolivia in 1968 (Labour and Employment Development). No women were appointed during this period (until September of 1999) to head ministries of economy, finance, or foreign affairs or eminently political ministries (ECLAC, 1999b:36-37). As for the current representation of women in ministries or secretariats of state, the situation is quite varied in the region. Circa 1999, women's presence ranged from 7% to 20% in most of the countries. Notable exceptions are Aruba and Ecuador, where women held 30% of ministerial posts—far above the average—and Guyana and Brazil, where the figure was only around 5%. Today, the ministerial posts occupied by women continue to be concentrated in the social area, although there appears to be a growing trend to incorporate more women in areas traditionally dominated by men.

With respect to the areas with which this report is concerned, in 1999 women had a significant presence in the economic domain in Aruba, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica and Peru, while in labour they were well represented in Aruba, Bahamas, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica and Uruguay.⁴⁰ Women tend to be slightly better represented in undersecretary or vice-minister posts—which generally are positions of support to the primary officeholder, with mainly administrative or managerial functions rather than the political role played by the ministers or secretaries—than in top ministerial posts. With regard to the participation of women in public posts within the ministries of labour, a study in Paraguay showed that the proportion of women has increased considerably in middle management positions; in the Ministry of Justice and Labour, for example, the proportion of female managers is equal to that of male managers (Secretaría de la Mujer, 1997:26). Preliminary data available for the countries of the South Cone confirm this trend, which points to the need for a more precise assessment of the presence of women in various positions within the ministries of labour and, especially, economy in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

³⁹ In Latin America and the Caribbean, women won the right to vote between 1929 (Ecuador) and 1961 (Bahamas and Paraguay). The majority of the countries of the region gave women the right to vote during the 1940s and 1950s (See ECLAC, 1999b:29).

⁴⁰ The economic domain includes foreign trade, finance, credit, industry, commercial integration and tourism. The labour sphere includes labour and combinations of labour with other areas such as education, training, social security, social affairs, social welfare and sports (ECLAC, 1999b:43).

Women's access to positions in the legislative branch has been slow, and until recently fewer than 20% of lawmakers were women. Nevertheless, their incorporation into lawmaking bodies has had a significant impact in that it has led to discussion and approval of legislation that addresses the needs of women. Indeed, laws of crucial importance, such as those mentioned previously in this document, have been proposed by women in many countries. According to the information collected in the ECLAC/FLACSO study, the countries with the largest proportion of female lawmakers in the senate or upper house of the legislature—in the case of the countries that have a bicameral legislative body—are in the Caribbean: Barbados (28.6%), Belize (37.5%), Jamaica (23.8%) and Trinidad and Tobago (29%). The lowest levels of female representation are in Argentina (5.6%), Bolivia (3.7%) and Chile (4.1%). Haiti has no women in this position (ECLAC, 1999b:63). The countries with the greatest female representation in the lower house of the legislative body are Argentina (27.6%) and Mexico (17.4%), while in the Caribbean countries the female presence in the lower house is smaller than in the upper house.⁴¹

Women's presence in the judicial branch has increased significantly in recent decades at the level of courts of first and second instance but not at the highest level. Generally speaking, no more than 10% of supreme court justices are women, and in most South American countries no women at all sit on the supreme court. Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Uruguay have never had a female supreme court judge. On the other hand, nine countries in the Caribbean and Central America have a female presence of between 10% and 15% on their supreme courts. Moreover, in the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court—which is headquartered in Santa Lucia and serves the Eastern Caribbean countries that are members of the Commonwealth—five of the six national representatives are women.

In the lower courts, women's participation is generally concentrated in the family and juvenile courts, while commercial and criminal courts clearly remain the province of male judges. The presence of female judges in labour tribunals seems to be increasing and in some cases women now outnumber men. This is the case in Argentina, where in 1999 almost 54% of labour judges were women. In Uruguay, the proportion of women in labour tribunals in Montevideo rose from 37% in 1990 to 78.5% in 1998. The Labour Tribunal of Asunción (Paraguay) in 1999 had one woman out of a total five labour judges. It would be enlightening to undertake a more precise evaluation of the situation at the regional level, not only with regard to the presence of women in labour courts but also in commercial and criminal courts.

The fact that there are more women in positions of authority in the public sector does not automatically mean that public policies have become more gender sensitive. In fact, many women—especially when they come to occupy decision-making positions—adopt the approaches and objectives that dominate the agenda and environment in which they work in order to offset, as much as possible, the negative effects of being “a woman in a man's world.” Some distance themselves explicitly from gender considerations and issues. However, as the concern for gender equity arose initially from the experiences and demands of women, it is likely that more women than men will be active promoters of change in this regard. Their equitable representation in decision-making positions, apart from being an expression of democracy, is therefore a requirement for greater mainstreaming of the gender perspective in public policies.

Other relevant information on this subject concerns the number of human resources on the staff of sectoral ministries and public institutions who are experts in gender issues and whether these individuals are men or women. At present, all or most of the personnel hired as gender experts seem to be women. The existence of more male gender specialists might help to correct the false perception of gender equity as solely a “women's issue” and break down the dichotomy between the “general” interests of men and the “specific” interests of women. It might also lead to greater awareness and understanding of how the current gender system limits men and how a society with more equitable social and gender relationships could benefit them. Affirmative hiring policies aimed at placing more women in traditionally male

⁴¹ The senate or upper house wields more power than the lower house because it generally has the power to veto and/or modify legislation sent to it by the lower house.

environments might be accompanied by efforts to get more men involved in the public affairs and issues that have traditionally been associated with women.

3. Modernization and institutional culture

An analysis of the issue of gender mainstreaming in public policies should also look at how the modernization of the State has resulted in a public apparatus that not only is more effective and less expensive in economic terms but also more efficient in its capacity to manage and deliver services, adapting to the demands of new social actors, including women. How have the commitments assumed in relation to gender equity in the institutional culture been expressed in the way public policies are formulated? To answer that question, it will be necessary to examine the systems and modalities of work that encourage or discourage decision-makers from considering the needs and positions of women, including both the beneficiaries and the providers or formulators of public policies and services.

In order to proclaim that gender equity—and therefore social equity—has been “mainstreamed,” it will be necessary to have institutions that, *inter alia*, practice democratic and participatory means of formulating proposals and taking decisions. They must be institutions that facilitate dialogue and discussion with beneficiaries of issues having to do with power relationships between women and men. They must allow and encourage both men and women from the beneficiary group to explicitly and directly influence processes relating to proposal, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects. They must also be transparent institutions that actively inform the citizenry about their objectives, strategies, resource allocations and feedback mechanisms. They use information in a democratic way which, among other things, means that they use language that can be understood by the majority of people and not just a group of superspecialists, regardless of the technical area involved. Their strategy for external communication facilitates and favours the exchange of opinions and dialogue with the public on topics of common interest, including those related to gender equity.

In addition, they are institutions that encourage equitable and democratic participation within their own organization. This might be expressed through such things as affirmative hiring policies, equal pay for women and men, leadership styles and horizontal communication, promotion of cooperation rather than competition, encouragement of intersectoral and multidisciplinary work, and stimulation of learning processes. These are institutions that also give due consideration to the family and reproductive responsibilities of their employees and look for institutional arrangements that will make it easier for them to balance their work and family lives, such as flexible work and meeting schedules and availability of childcare services. They have clear policies and procedures for dealing with problems such as sexual harassment and other manifestations of abuse or discrimination. As Goetz has pointed out, institutions that commit to gender equity do not reject but rather embrace ways and means of integrating the private and the public, bringing the home into the office.

These are matters that warrant further study in the future, and since they involve qualitative indicators that require specification and contextualization, it would be advisable that such studies be carried out at the level of each ministry of economy, labour, trade and other public institutions in the countries of the region.

4. External context

This assessment has been limited to studying mainstreaming of the gender perspective in economic and labour policies at the level of governments and public institutions in the region. However, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the public sector does not work in a vacuum. Rather, it depends on other social actors for the adoption and implementation of its policies. This even more true in a global context in which the role of the State seems to be shrinking, with a consequent reduction in negotiating room and participation and an increase in privatization, which transfers to private initiative and control of matters that used to be the subject of public attention and decision-making. Various authors have

noted that there is less and less space to manoeuvre and decide in national policy-making because the major decisions regarding policy and the economy are being made outside the traditional policy arenas.

In this new setting, it seems that different and divergent trends are sharing the stage at the same time. On the one hand, there is a predominance of the interests of major economic capitals that leads to the imposition of structural adjustment policies and growing levels of economic, social and political inequality at the micro, meso and macro levels. On the other hand, there is growing concern about social issues and a desire to strengthen citizenship. This interest in strengthening democracy is growing not only among those who have traditionally been concerned with social equity and well-being, but also among agencies and organizations whose primary interest is “economic efficiency.” This has come about as a result of the need to limit the obvious negative social consequences of current structural adjustment and economic policies, precisely because some emerging phenomena raise the spectre of “ingovernability.”

It is in this paradoxical context that the creation of public mechanisms for the advancement of women that place gender equity on the public agenda is occurring. It is important to note that behind the discussions of modernization of the State, public policies, the market and free or regulated initiatives, there is an important realignment of social forces, groups and interests of men and women, businesses and workers, in addition to large-scale redefinition of the very concepts of development and well-being and access to these for the various social groups and stakeholders. Both organizations and individuals are calling for the strengthening of active citizenship. Although the growing concern for gender equity is basically a product of the effort of the women’s movement, it is also conditioned by other factors and by a global context that supports or at least reflects the values and demands expressed by the women’s movement.

At the same time, other movements are emerging—for example, in the face of threats to the quality of life and the environment—and they are demonstrating the existence of interest in and potential for collective participation and citizen organization. Hence, the institutionalization of a gender perspective will also depend on commitments and actions in favour of gender equity on the part of other social actors and on the degree to which governments espouse the proposals and demands expressed by citizens.

In relation to economic and labour policies, an important stakeholder is the labour movement, although some maintain that its influence is waning at the global level. To what extent are labour unions taking up the demands for gender equity? Through the years, women have developed some strategies for making their presence felt in the labour movement in the region, although the situation varies greatly between countries, and within them, between sectors, reflecting the varying degrees of feminization of different sectors. In general, labour organizations have little female representation in their leadership, and they are not always very willing to embrace the social and labour demands of the women’s groups that have been organized in recent decades. Women’s involvement in the labour movement faces various obstacles, including women’s double workday, the lack of support services for women’s reproductive tasks, the weak labour identity of women and the difficulty that unions themselves have in incorporating the concerns of women into their agendas and political priorities (ECLAC, 1999b:81-83).

Democratic and equitable distribution of power is even more precarious in organizations and associations of business leaders, another important social stakeholder in the economic and labour sphere that wields enormous power, particularly with the adoption of neoliberal-type economic models that give them a leading role in economic development (ECLAC, 1999b:87). Although there is increasing concern in the business sector for issues related to respect for diversity and ethical-social matters, business leaders’ interest in applying a true policy of diversity and gender equity is still incipient and is normally subordinate and closely linked to the “unquestionable” objectives of growth in the production and consumption of goods and monetary gain. The so-called “glass ceiling” is more impenetrable in business organizations than in other social environments. Women occupy fewer than 5% of executive positions in major companies at the world level. A survey conducted in Brazil in 1991 showed that only 3% of senior

executives were women (ILO, 1998:6). Similarly, the presence of women in leadership positions within business associations in Latin America and the Caribbean is almost nil, with a handful of exceptions.

Finally, more research is needed to determine what role and influence women's organizations have vis-à-vis the adoption and implementation of economic and labour policies. More and more members of the female labour force find themselves in precarious and unpaid positions in the economy, with no social protection whatsoever. These women have no voice and their plight is not recognized by the officially sanctioned labour organizations (unions, organizations of business leaders, and government). Other organizations have begun to address the situation of this segment of workers and are striving to improve their working and living conditions.

In the region, one of the main vehicles for political action by women has been the creation of issue networks (ECLAC, 1999b:90). These networks have mainly taken up issues relating to health, violence, education and, to a lesser extent, labour. It would be interesting to learn how many groups of women in the region are also working specifically on issues relating to economic and trade policies of the countries and their effects in terms of gender, and what their experience has been in interacting with the public institutional structure.

To that end, it would be useful to have more precise information on the existence in the region of individual women or networks in the academic field that are studying economic and labour issues from a gender perspective in order to promote strategic alliances for the attainment of the objective of economic development and a labour environment that will be more equitable for the women of Latin America and the Caribbean.

III. In conclusion

In the current context of rapid socio-economic change, the countries are seeking innovative solutions to ensure socio-economic development with equity, security and quality of working and living conditions. Given the speed with which economic and social restructuring is taking place, these objectives represent a great challenge. Worldwide acceptance of a model of economic development based on the principles of sustained economic growth and a free and open market, seems—at least for now—to be having a substantial impact on employment, for while economic production and consumption are growing, so are structural unemployment, instability, lack of job security and inequity in access to the benefits of progress for large segments of the Latin American and Caribbean population. Moreover, the data indicate that the prevailing socio-economic models retain a strong gender bias, in which women continue to be more negatively affected than men in terms of their economic autonomy, their permanence in the labour force and the quality of their jobs.

ECLAC's assessment confirms that the governments in the region are increasingly taking steps to adopt and implement policies and programmes to promote economies and labour markets that are more equitable from a gender perspective. During the 1990s, all the countries adopted national plans that, to a greater or lesser extent, set out objectives and encouraged programmes related to the economic and labour rights of women. This is not insignificant, given that heretofore policies on equality have generally focused mainly on other areas more directly related to the roles and responsibilities traditionally associated with women's identity and concerns, such as health, education and domestic violence.

The degree and the manner in which economic, labour and other traditionally “male” issues are being addressed from a gender equity perspective is an indicator of progress toward more complex and integrated attitudes and approaches to equity.

In the areas of employment and agricultural development, in particular, the governments have formulated specific objectives, created gender units within the corresponding ministries and established interinstitutional cooperation mechanisms to promote policies and programmes designed to foster greater equality of opportunities and treatment for women and men. Nevertheless, a diversity of approaches, strategies and programmes are being applied. Among the objectives established in the economic and labour domain, one set are aimed at supporting women primarily in their role as mothers and as the individuals responsible for reproduction and family and social well-being, and only secondarily as productive and economic agents. These objectives do not call into question a gender system characterized by strong segmentation and division of labour that undervalues the contribution and work of women. They are often limited to anti-poverty initiatives consisting of micro-interventions that are short-term “bandaid” solutions with no linkage to major economic and labour policies.

Still, the assessment also shows that several governments are gradually embracing another type of objective that seeks to ensure greater recognition of women’s value as economic actors, seeking full acknowledgement of their substantial contribution and extending to them the benefits they deserve, eliminating discriminatory and exclusive practices that detract from the quality of their work and personal lives and, therefore, negatively affect society as a whole. There is a trend—albeit an incipient one—to promote the economic and political empowerment of women with the ultimate aim of bringing about a structural transformation of economic systems and mechanisms so that they will cease to reproduce patterns of direct or indirect discrimination and guarantee women’s ability to exercise their rights, both as workers and producers and as consumers and beneficiaries.

To ensure that national and sectoral plans for equity between women and men do not remain mere “annexes” to economic and labour policies and programmes, the national mechanisms for the advancement of women in the region are striving to see that the sectoral ministries assume responsibility for integrating these concerns into the core of their institutional life. Accordingly, the explicit inclusion of non-discrimination objectives in the principal sectoral plans constitutes a goal in itself. This assessment shows progress in that regard, especially in social and poverty alleviation plans in some countries of the region. The incorporation of gender equity is less frequent in employment plans (where they exist) and is virtually absent in economic and trade plans. An issue to be considered in the future is the degree of linkage and consistency between the various national and sectoral plans and policies with respect to gender equity objectives.

To improve the status and position of women in the economic and labour spheres, numerous countries in the region have created sectoral and interinstitutional mechanisms to coordinate policies and programmes for that purpose. Gender units, intersectoral committees and interinstitutional agreements have been established, especially in the areas of employment, professional training, rural and micro-entrepreneurial development, and generation of economic and labour information and statistics that correctly reflect the situation and contributions of women. It is accurate to say that sectoral and intersectoral structures are mutually reinforcing, as has been demonstrated by the creation of units within the ministries of labour and agriculture, on one hand, and intersectoral committees to coordinate policies and programmes on employment and agrarian development, on the other hand. Often, the existence of a specific unit within a sectoral ministry facilitates the creation of *intersectoral* committees or units that address sectoral policies from a gender perspective and with a multidisciplinary approach. Nevertheless, intersectoral effort is not always preceded by sectoral attention

The creation of an intersectoral forum that gives political importance and visibility to the issue of gender equity can motivate a sectoral ministry to pay more attention and build internal capacity with respect to the matters being debated at the interministerial level. In future, more qualitative studies should investigate the characteristics, responsibilities, functions and resources of these sectoral units and interministerial committees in order to evaluate their degree of efficiency, institutional and political recognition and continuity over time in the face of changes of government, among other things.

The notable efforts that have been made in the region to enact legislation to ensure more equitable working conditions for women and give them access to economic benefits should also be recognized. In

previous decades, protective standards were geared towards women in their “reproductive” capacity as mothers and caregivers. These measures did not take sufficient account of the family or social responsibilities of men or the economic responsibilities of women, which resulted in greater exclusion of and discrimination against women in the labour and economic markets. During the 1990s, efforts have sought increasingly to incorporate the principles of equal opportunity and treatment in national legislation in the region to enable men and women to realize their full potential both in the labour and family environments.

It is gradually being accepted that, up to now, the labour market and economic activity have been organized around a male paradigm that does not sufficiently acknowledge or value the multiple productive and reproductive responsibilities and contributions of women, which in turn has led to greater exclusion of and discrimination against women. As a result, there is also growing recognition of the need to implement affirmative action provisions—especially in the areas in which women are most excluded—which could have a very positive effect in accelerating progress towards true equity.

In spite of the successes achieved thus far in the region, discriminatory regulations persist that hinder women’s access to jobs.⁴² There also continue to exist major problems in relation to legal protection for women employed in the agricultural sector, subcontracted and domestic workers, and casual and temporary workers. Moreover, specialists point to a marked inadequacy of administrative measures and other mechanisms designed specifically to ensure the effective application of non-discriminatory legal principles. At the same time, women’s ignorance of their rights, difficulties in proving discrimination⁴³ and widespread lack of knowledge regarding the instruments adopted by regulators and judges impede effective enforcement of the legal protections that do exist to prevent discrimination. Finally, there is a conspicuous absence of programmes and initiatives designed to increase public knowledge and debate on economic and trade rights and agreements in the countries of the region.

In a context in which more and more decisions about processes and modalities of production and redistribution of goods and physical and social services are being made by new transnational stakeholders, not only at the global level but also at the national level, “economic literacy” may be an indispensable strategy for ensuring democratic consensus regarding the modality and orientation of the transformations that are occurring. Social and gender equity in the labour and economic realms cannot be fully achieved if the right of all social actors to democratically express and debate their communities’ needs and aspirations for social and economic development is not recognized. Decisions about economic development objectives and modalities, both at the micro and macro levels, cannot be taken in a closed circle of privileged citizens under the pretext that the matter is too complicated and specialized to be put to the broader citizenship for consideration. Effective and equitable development will only be achieved to the extent that all people—men and women—who contribute to the development of their countries are informed about the decisions to be taken and have a say in the process.

A review of the programmes and projects that both the national mechanisms for the advancement of women and the sectoral ministries are implementing in the labour and economic areas suggests several conclusions with regard to mainstreaming of the gender perspective. Although the objective of gender mainstreaming is increasingly being endorsed at the level of national discourse, the process of actually institutionalizing the gender perspective in economic and labour programmes and projects is still incipient, fragmented and marginal. Based on the available information, for the most part the ministries of labour and, especially, the ministries of trade, finance and economic development in the region continue to run their general programmes in a gender-neutral manner. Nevertheless, there does

⁴² For example, there are regulations—unrelated to pregnancy—that prohibit women (but not men) from performing certain jobs deemed “unhealthy, dangerous or involving heavy labour” (Argentina); working overtime, except in exceptional circumstances (Brazil); or cleaning or repairing running machinery or engines (Uruguay).

⁴³ It is worth noting here that in some European countries, in response to similar problems, it has been proposed that the burden of proof should be reversed—i.e., employers should be obliged to prove that they have not acted in a discriminatory manner toward female employees.

appear to be growing effort within some ministries and national institutions to implement programmes and projects aimed at achieving greater economic autonomy and labour participation by women. This is the case mainly with ministries of labour and agriculture, professional training and statistics institutions and, to a lesser degree, some ministries and institutions linked to the development of microenterprise and domestic trade.

At the same time, in various countries of the region, the national mechanisms for the advancement of women continue to promote projects that seek to improve women's economic and labour situation through training activities, generation of self-employment opportunities, support for productive activities and other initiatives. To the extent that the gender perspective is being integrated into regular sectoral programmes, it can be said that progress is being made towards true gender mainstreaming that will translate into greater de facto equity between women and men.

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the strategy of gender mainstreaming does not minimize or eliminate the need for specific, targeted interventions for the most vulnerable groups. On the contrary, *targeted interventions must be included as an essential component of any programme or action* that seeks to be efficient and consistent with the proposed objectives of equity. Ultimately, the implementation of interventions aimed at guaranteeing the economic and labour rights of women—even when they are short-term, separate from and even at odds with the programmes and general objectives of the sectoral ministries—represents an important step forward, especially compared with a total absence of activities that take account of the differing realities and needs of women and men in the economy and the workplace.

To support the process of mainstreaming gender in all policies and programmes, the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean, and more specifically the offices of women, have devoted considerable attention to improving some technical resources that are viewed as indispensable in this process. On one hand, great effort is being made to establish and maintain information and analysis systems that adequately show what is happening with women and men in different areas of development in the country.

In several countries of the region, programmes or institutional mechanisms have been developed to promote the collection, analysis and presentation of official databases with all information disaggregated by sex, which will serve the dual purpose of, first, informing the public about the status of men and women in the country and, second, monitoring the efficiency of public policies through appropriate gender indicators. In this process, it has become increasingly clear that it is not sufficient to simply ensure that the statistics currently being collected are disaggregated by sex; it is also essential to revise the concepts and definitions being applied in the collection of information for existing statistics systems so that they accurately reflect the roles, contributions and status of women and men.

Similarly, it is necessary to revise the methodologies for collection and interpretation of data, highlighting the existence of cultural and gender stereotypes that might influence or determine certain findings. Finally, surveys must be conducted on new and emerging issues that are of special importance in the effort to uphold women's rights. For example, with regard to economic and labour indicators, it is imperative to consider and analyse information on crucial social phenomena such as women's work in the unstructured sector of the economy, unpaid reproductive work, provision of social services in the community and the home, formal and informal networks of support and solidarity and access to information and training. Regular surveys of time use could also provide very valuable information for better analysing and assessing the situation, contributions and benefits of women and men in the economic development of their countries, in addition to generating indispensable input for monitoring the impact of public policies on the two sexes.

In the process of political sensitization and action, the importance of ensuring that the information produced is widely disseminated and utilized cannot be stressed enough. The ECLAC survey reveals that most of the documents published by the national women's offices present a broad overview of what is happening in terms of gender in the country, although a growing number are also producing documents

that reveal the situation of women in the labour market. In the area of “gender and economy” the most noteworthy publications are those on the issue of poverty, although some countries also seem to be endeavouring to raise public awareness of emerging issues such as accounting for unpaid domestic labour and gender differences in contributions to the home and time use. It appears that state institutions in general have produced—or at least disseminated—very few works on topics related to macroeconomic, trade and financial policies and their effects in terms of gender equity.

The planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, projects and services that accurately reflect the different positions and needs of women and men require public officials and professionals who are willing and trained to carry out these tasks. During the 1990s, there was a marked increase in sensitization and training events, which extended to public institutions. This trend was accompanied, especially in the second half of the decade, by the production of numerous technical manuals. It remains to be seen to what extent the information contained in these manuals and presented in workshops and seminars is actually being applied and incorporated in day-to-day practice, though it would appear that the impact of these technical seminars and manuals has been fairly limited. For the moment, they do not seem to have resulted in equal consideration in the design, implementation and evaluation of all public programmes of the needs, contributions and benefits to men and women. It is important recall that more widespread and effective use and application of these technical instruments will also depend on the existence of political processes to complement the technical efforts.

Indeed, it must be recognized that the creation of more equitable societies is not only a technical matter but, above all, a political process founded on shared democratic will. Given the political nature of gender equity, technical initiatives and support mechanisms, including training activities, to strengthen women’s organizational and political capacity are critical. They will enable women to gain greater confidence and ability, as well as increase their access to technical information and resources for identifying and negotiating their own demands and proposals with the institutions that—because they are “public” and “democratic”—should also be representing their interests.

Further study of several issues is needed in order to analyse the state of the art with respect to mainstreaming the gender perspective in economic and labour policies in the region. One such issue is the allocation of public resources. It would be enlightening to know to what extent the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean have succeeded in mainstreaming the concern for gender equity in public budgets and what amounts and proportions are being allocated to programmes related to gender equity in the labour and economic spheres. It should become a standard institutionalized practice to analyse the allocation and incidence of public expenditures not just in general terms but in terms of how they benefit men and women. The resulting data should be widely disseminated with a view to fostering citizen knowledge, management and control in the transparent and democratic use and management of public funds.

Another issue that requires further study is that of democratic parity within public institutions. Although the public sector, in general, shows better indices than the private sector with regard to the recruitment of women to official and professional posts, in general women are still insufficiently represented at almost all levels and in all branches of government. Moreover, female representation decreases the higher one climbs in the decision-making hierarchy, and the under-representation of women is even more acute in the traditionally male-dominated areas of concern and power that generally have greater weight in national and international policy agendas. As a result of their linkage with social policy, labour institutions are increasingly giving women access to positions of authority, although it should be underscored that this is occurring in a context in which, more and more, labour interests are being subordinated to economic, trade and financial interests. Despite the progress noted, in general, the countries of the region are still far from achieving gender parity in ministries, tribunals and other public institutions related to labour, and they are farther still from that goal in the case of institutions that set the economic, trade and financial policies of the countries.

A third issue that merits further study in the future is related to the following question: How and to what extent has the incorporation of concern for equity between women and men in public

commitments and agendas led to a democratization of the organizational culture of public institutions? True institutionalization of the gender perspective will influence not only *what* economic and social development model is applied and *who* applies it, but also *how* it is applied or, in other words, how public policies are made. It is not enough to include women in models and institutions that are not suited to their needs; it is necessary to transform the paradigms and methods being applied in development and public administration. As a group of Colombian women so eloquently put it: “We don’t want just a bigger piece of the pie; we want to change the recipe.”

Ministries and public institutions that take the gender perspective seriously will utilize, *inter alia*, democratic and participatory modalities for formulating proposals and taking decisions; they will facilitate dialogue and democratic consensus; they will encourage debate around power relationships; they will be transparent institutions with clear and open communication strategies; they will apply affirmative hiring policies until an acceptable representation that reflects the sexual, social and cultural diversity of the society is achieved; they will promote horizontal and cooperative styles of work and leadership; and they will facilitate the reconciliation of work outside the home with family and social responsibilities. More specific qualitative studies are needed to determine how ministries and sectoral institutions in the economic, labour, trade, financial and other spheres are progressing in this regard.

Finally, this assessment has clearly shown that up to now little attention has been paid to gender equity in the formulation and implementation of macroeconomic, trade and financial policies. In a context in which political and economic processes and decisions in the international arena increasingly are shaping national economic and labour policy, the incorporation of an equity perspective (social and gender) in macroeconomic policies is critical for achieving development with equity. But it is precisely in this area that, with very few exceptions, the countries of the region have failed to establish objectives or put in place sectoral or intersectoral mechanisms to assure that the needs of both women and men are considered. The handful of initiatives aimed at improving the economic situation of women that have been implemented by ministries of economy, productive development, finance or commerce have focused almost exclusively on assisting women microentrepreneurs in developing their businesses through one-time financial grants or specific training or microcredit projects which, in general, have been implemented on a “micro” scale.

The available information reveals a lack of awareness of the fact that *all* policies—including those that have to do with the economy and international trade, productive restructuring, and the financial and fiscal systems—have an impact on the gender system. It continues to be important to make visible the situation, status, contributions and economic benefits of women in comparison with men, since the information provided by the governments shows that in some circles there is still a reluctance to acknowledge the existence of “*de facto*” discrimination that is perpetuated by the current economic system and structures. For example, one ministry of finance argues that “...in our country there is equality between men and women in all areas, including labour, and therefore no special agreements or mechanisms have been implemented.” It should also be noted that there are still few national mechanisms for the advancement of women that have made inroads into macroeconomic, trade and financial policies and programmes.

The vast majority of the governments are still not affirming the need to investigate how economic, financial and commercial goals, systems and institutions themselves could generate relationships and benefits that would be more equitable in terms of gender. However, a national strategy that truly seeks to mainstream the gender perspective cannot guide action exclusively towards integration within the dominant model, which historically has been characterized by a stratified social organization that leads to social, racial, ethnic, and age- and sex-based exclusion.⁴⁴ In order to achieve societies that are more equitable in social and gender terms, it will be necessary to accept the need to link (macro)economic policies comprehensively with social policies, also taking into account that women and men do not have the same status, nor are the same opportunities and options available to them. It will therefore be imperative to adopt targeted and affirmative policies and interventions to ensure equitable outcomes.

⁴⁴ Policies on women, 1996-2005, formulated as part of Ecuador’s National Plan for Social Development.

Because attaining the objective of equity (social and gender) requires a revision of current power structures and relationships, not only between women and men but also between economic priorities, on the one hand, and social interests, on the other, the adoption and institutionalization of these objectives at the national level must necessarily be preceded by a process of intense dialogue and democratic negotiation. In this regard, it is important to recognize that the State's possibilities for achieving a just and equitable society for different groups of women and men depends not only on government action but on commitments and initiatives in this area by all social stakeholders. In a context in which the role of the State is diminishing, it is indispensable to involve labour, management, academic, environmental, indigenous, women's and other civic organizations in the process of deciding on the orientation and modalities for economic and labour development in the countries.

The capacity to introduce concern for gender equity in policy agendas, structures and modi operandi will largely determine whether the national commitments assumed in this area are fulfilled. Better knowledge of the priorities, structures and modalities of action of the various social actors involved will make it possible to develop a more effective strategy for addressing and dialoguing on a crucial issue in human development: the right of all people, males and females alike, to develop the capacity for expression, creation and decision-making in all facets of life and to fully enjoy the resulting benefits.

Annexes

Annex A: Tables

Table A.1

GOVERNMENT COORDINATION MECHANISMS FOR NATIONAL EQUALITY PLANS OR FOR MONITORING PROGRESS UNDER THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION (1990s)

Antigua and Barbuda	• Coordinating Council of Women's Affairs
Argentina	• Federal Council on Women • NGO forum chaired by the National Council on Women (CNM)
Bahamas	• National Women's Advisory Council
Barbados	• National Advisory Council on Women
Belize	• Women's Issue Network (1993 – present day) • National Women's Commission (1996 – present day) • Gender Integration Committee (1999 – present day)
Bolivia	• Interministerial Committee on Gender of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Planning • National NGO Beijing Liaison Committee
Brazil	...
Chile	• Interministerial Committee to Monitor Progress under the Plan for Equal Opportunities for Women 1994 – 1999
Colombia	• Sectoral Network of the National Advisory Commission for Equity and Participation for Women
Costa Rica	• Programme for Coordination of the Ministerial and Sectoral Offices of Women (OMM/QSM)
Cuba	...
Dominica	• Advisory Committee of the Women's Bureau (since 1980)
Dominican Republic	• Advisory Council of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, composed of the Ministries and Sectoral Offices (1999 – present day) • Sectoral Council on Women, composed of the Ministries and Sectoral Offices (1999 – present day) • National Coordinating Commission to Promote, Support and Monitor the Agreements of the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995 – present day)
Ecuador	• Linkage of the National Women's Council (CONAMU) with the Office of Planning within the Office of the President of the Republic (1998 – present day) • Participation by CONAMU in the National Cabinet of Governors (1999)
El Salvador	• Board of Directors of the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women (ISDEMU) (1996 – present day)
Grenada	• Inter-Ministerial Commission
Guatemala	• General Assembly of the National Office of Women's Affairs (ONAM)
Guyana	• National Commission on Women
Haiti	...
Honduras	...
Jamaica	• Inter-Ministerial Committee, coordinated by the Bureau of Women's Affairs
Mexico	• Intersectoral Council of the National Commission on Women, composed of 14 governmental agencies (1999 – present day) • Advisory Council of the National Programme on Women, composed of various segments of society (1996 – present day) • Social Monitoring Unit, composed of various segments of society, performs monitoring and follow-up of the National Programme on Women (1996 – present day)
Netherlands Antilles	• Interdepartmental Advisory Board on Welfare, Family and Humanitarian Issues
Nicaragua	...
Panama	• National Council on Women
Paraguay	...
Peru	• Multisectoral Committee to Monitor Implementation of the Plan for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, 2000 - 2005 (as of 2000) • Multisectoral Committee to Monitor Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1999 – present day) • Multisectoral Committee for Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1999 – present day) • Multisectoral Committee on Gender, made up of public and civil society institutions
Saint Kitts and Nevis	• Inter-Ministerial Committee on Gender and Development
Saint Lucia	• Inter-Ministerial Committee on Women (IMC)
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	• National Commission on the Status of Women
Suriname	• Interdepartmental Committee on Gender Mainstreaming, hosted by Ministry of Home Affairs
Trinidad and Tobago	• Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Advancement of Women
Uruguay	• Commission to Monitor the Commitments Assumed in Beijing (1996 – present day)
Venezuela	• ...

Source: ECLAC, based on the available information provided by the governments in the framework of the survey for 1999 and 2000; - Directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.1065/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 1998. ... Data not available

GOVERNMENT COORDINATION MECHANISMS FOR THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUITY IN THE LABOUR SPHERE (1990s)

	Intersectoral committees	Interinstitutional agreements
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory Commission of Business and Professional Women (1993 - 1995) Expert commission for study and formulation of proposals on various topics, including labour (1991 - 1995) CNM – Ministry of Labour and Social Security joint committee on the Programme for Equal Opportunity in the Workplace(1994 - 1995) CNM – Ministry of Justice – National Juvenile and Family Council coordinating commission for the Project on Child Prostitution (2000) Argentine Tripartite Commission on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity for Men and Women in the Workplace (1998 – present day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CNM – Ministry of Labour and Social Security: (1994; 1997; 2000 currently being negotiated)
Belize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum Wage Council (1996 – present day) with representation of the Women's Issue Network 	
Bolivia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Undersecretary of Gender Issues, Generational Affairs and Family – Ministry of Labour^a
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group for the Elimination of Discrimination in Employment and in the Workplace (1996) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Council on Women's Rights (CNDM) – Ministry of Labour, Protocol on Women, Education and Labour (1996) CNDM – Secretariat of State for Human Rights – Ministry of Labour – Fundação Roberto Marinho/Canal Futura, Interministerial Protocol
Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating Commission for the Occupational Training Programme for Low-income Women (1999) Tripartite Commission for Equality of Opportunities for Men and Women in the Workplace (1995 – 1999) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee on Women and Work of the Council for Social Dialogue (2000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Women's Service (SERNAM) – Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (1995; 1996; 1997; 1998; 1999) SERNAM – Department of Labour (1995; 1996; 1997; 1998; 1999) SERNAM – National Training and Employment Service (SENCE): Professional Training (1996; 1997; 1998; 1999) SERNAM – Institute for Standardization of Benefits (1998 – 1999) SERNAM – National Board for Nursery Schools (JUNJI) (Childcare Centres for Children of Temporary Workers) (1991 – present day)
Costa Rica		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Institute on Women (INAMU) – Ministry of Labour and Social Security (1999)
Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissions on the Employment of Women (created during the 1980s; revitalized in 1996) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) – State Committee on Labour and Social Security: Quarterly Plans
Dominican Republic		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Women's Affairs (SEM) – Ministry of Labour^a SEM- Institute for Professional and Technical Training^a
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee for Monitoring and Implementation of International Agreements (1999) CONAMU Committee for Coordination with the National Polytechnic Institute, charged with devising alternative methodology for setting wages^a CONAMU linkage with the Secretariat of State for Social Development (confirmed by the Ministry of Labour, among others; 1998 – present day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CONAMU– Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (1999) CONAMU – Institute for Economic Research of the Catholic University (1999)
El Salvador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Coordinating Commission for Equality of Opportunities and Treatment for Men and Women in the Workplace (1997 - 1998) 	

Table A.2 (concluded)

	Committees (continued)	Agreements (continued)
Guatemala		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ONAM – Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare – San Carlos University: Letter of Understanding^a
Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee for Reform of the Labour Code’s Special Provisions for Women^a National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labour^a Coordination Mechanism between the National Institute on Women and the Ministry of Labour^a Women’s Forum on Central American Integration^a 	
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Coordinating Committee for the programme “More and Better Jobs for Women in Mexico” (1997 – present day) Operations Group for the programme “More and Better Jobs for Women in Mexico” (1997 – present day) Interinstitutional Group for the programme “More and Better Jobs for Women in Mexico” (1997 – present day) Council on Standardization and Certification of Occupational Competency: Committee for Standardization of Occupational Competency in Community and Social Services (1998 – present day) 	
Panama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanism for Coordination between the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the Programme on Working Women of the Panamanian Institute for Labour Studies^a Mechanism for Coordination between the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the National Institute for Professional Training^a 	
Paraguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Tripartite Commission for Equality between Men and Women in the Workplace (1998) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Women’s Affairs – National Service for Professional Training^a Department of Women’s Affairs – Ministry of Justice and Labour: Cooperation Agreement, 1997; Agreement on the Programme for Training of Young First-time Job Seekers, 1999
Peru		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry for Women’s Affairs and Human Development (PROMUDEH) – Ministry of Fisheries: Agreement on Work and Training (1997)
Suriname	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tripartite National Steering Committee on Women Workers’ Rights^a Tripartite Labour Advisory Board: participation of representatives of the Steering Committee (see above)^a 	
Uruguay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tripartite Commission for Equality of Opportunities and Treatment in the Workplace (1997) 	

Source: ECLAC, based on the available information provided by the governments in the framework of the survey for 1999 and 2000;
 - Directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.1065/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 1998.

^a Data not available on the period in which the committee or agreement was implemented or operational

Table A.3

GOVERNMENT COORDINATION MECHANISMS FOR THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUITY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT (1990s)

	Intersectoral committees	Interinstitutional agreements
Bolivia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Undersecretary of Gender Issues, Generational Affairs and Undersecretary of Rural Development^a
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CNDM – Ministry of Agricultural Development (MDA-INCRA) partnership for a gender module in the Training Programme for Entrepreneurs^a 	
Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group on Rural Women: Institutions of the State and civil society; produced the Plan on Equal Opportunities for Rural Women (1995 – 1999) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SERNAM – National Institute for Agricultural Development (1995; 1996; 1997) SERNAM – National Forestry Corporation (1997; 1998; 1999) SERNAM – Agriculture and Livestock Service (1998 - 1999) SERNAM – Foundation for Agricultural Communication, Training and Culture (1998)
Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cuban network for technical cooperation with institutions and agencies that provide support for rural women (1992 – present day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FMC – Ministry of Agriculture: Joint Plan of Action (1997 – present day) FMC – Ministry of Agriculture: Joint letter of collaboration to prioritize women's farming (signed in 1998)
Dominican Republic		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEM – Dominican Agricultural Bank^a SEM – Ministry of Agriculture^a SEM – National Confederation of Rural Women^a SEM – Dominican Agrarian Institute^a
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration between CONAMU and the National Institute for Agricultural Development^a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CONAMU–National Institute for Agricultural Development – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (Department of Property Assets) <p>interinstitutional agreement in the framework of the Saraguro Yacuambi R</p>
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National network for technical cooperation with institutions and agencies that provide support for rural women (1998 – present day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development – State Governments: Agrarian interinstitutional collaboration in the framework of the programme Women in Rural Development (annually) Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development; Environment, Natural Resources and Social Development; Communication and Transport; Agrarian interinstitutional collaboration in the framework of the programme Women in Rural Development (1998 – present day) CONMUJER – Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development; Environment, Natural Resources and Social Development; Health; Public Education; Federal Office of Agrarian Rights (Procuraduría Agraria) – National System for Comprehensive Development of the National Indigenous Institute – National Ecology Institute: Joint state-agency agreement for backyard farming production (16 October 1998)
Paraguay		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Women's Affairs – Ministry of Agriculture^a

Source: ECLAC, based on the available information provided by the governments in the framework of the survey for 1999 and 2000; - Directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.1065/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 1998.

^a Data not available on the period in which the committee or agreement was implemented or operational

Table A.4

GOVERNMENT COORDINATION MECHANISMS FOR THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUITY IN THE ECONOMIC, BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SPHERE (1990s)

	Intersectoral committees	Interinstitutional
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNM – Secretariat of Industry, Office of the Undersecretary for Fisheries and Medium-sized Business, collaboration in relation to the Credit Programme (1994 - 1997) • CNM – Ministry of Economy, collaboration in relation to the Programme for Productive Restructuring, (1994 – 1995) 	
Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected formation of a technical committee between the Office of the Undersecretary of Industry and Domestic Trade and the Office of the Undersecretary of Gender Issues, Generational Affairs and Family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the Undersecretary of C and Family – Office of the Under Trade: Agreement on joint action productive sector^a • Office of the Undersecretary of C and Family – Office of the Unders • Office of the Undersecretary of C and Family – Departmental Assoc
Chile		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SERNAM – Ministry of National A
Cuba		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FMC – Ministry of the Sugar Indu 1992 – present day) • FMC – Ministry Science, Technol Action (1998)
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONAMU collaboration with the Secretariat for Social Development (1998 – present day) 	
Guatemala		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONAM – Secretariat of the Natio National Policy for the Developm Guatemala (1999)
Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination mechanism between the National Institute on Women and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (1999) 	
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination mechanism between the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit and the Ministry of the Interior through the General Coordinating Office of the National Commission on Women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Social Development: with the executive branch at th framework of policies and program • CONMUJER – Nacional Financi programme “Businesswomen – V
Dominican Republic		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEM – Office of the Public Prosec • SEM – Dominican Centre for Expe • SEM – Industrial Development Co

Source: ECLAC, based on the available information provided by the governments in the framework of the survey for 1999 and 2000; - Directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.1065/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 1998.

^a Data not available on the period in which the committee or agreement was implemented or operational

Table A.5

GOVERNMENT COORDINATION MECHANISMS IN RELATION TO SYSTEMS OF ECONOMIC AND LABOUR INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE (1990s)

	Intersectoral committees	Interinstitutional
Antigua and Barbuda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Planning, Statistics Division, Census Advisory Committee: Executive Director of the Women's Bureau is a member 	
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CNM – National Statistics and Census Institute: System for Information, Evaluation and Monitoring of Social Programmes – Inter-network agreements in the framework of the National Information System on Women (1998 – present day) 	
Belize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Indicators Committee (1996 – present day) with representation of the Women's Department and the Ministry of Human Development, Women and Civil Society 	
Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Undersecretary of Gender Issues, Generational Affairs and Family – National Statistics Institute – Centre for Economic and Social Development (CIDES) (1998) 	
Chile		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SERNAM – National Statistics agreement (1999 – present day) SERNAM – INE: Specific agreement on male and female labour at the national level
Dominica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census 2000 Committee: Director of the Women's Bureau is represented to make inputs on gender 	
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interinstitutional Committee of the Integrated System of Social Indicators for Ecuador (SIISE), of which the database on women (SIMUJER) is a part (as of July 2000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CONAMU – National Statistics: Inclusion of gender variables on studies and commissions on studies conducted CONAMU – INEC: Inclusion of gender variables on studies and commissions on studies conducted
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission for Research and Statistics on Rural Women: Office of the Undersecretary for Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development – CONMUJER, National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) – National Population Council – Alumni Association of Chapingo University – Interdisciplinary Group on Women, Work and Poverty^a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CONMUJER – INEGI : Interdisciplinary Group on Women, Work and Poverty (1999 – ongoing) Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development: Collaboration agreement to develop studies on women (1997- present day)
Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry for Women's Affairs and Human Development – National Statistics Institute^a 	
Dominican Republic		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEM – National Statistics Office
Venezuela		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Council on Women – Office (1997)

Source: ECLAC, based on the available information provided by the governments in the framework of the survey for 1999 and 2000; - Directory of national organizations dealing with programmes and policies on women in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.1065/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 1998. "Indicadores de género disponibles en países seleccionados de América Latina y el Caribe", Documento de Trabajo, Women and Development Unit, 2000.

^a Data not available on the period in which the committee or agreement was implemented or operational

Annex B: Methodology

In June 1999, the Secretariat of ECLAC sent a letter to all the national offices or institutions for the advancement of women in Latin America and the Caribbean with a view to obtaining information on the extent to which the gender perspective was being mainstreamed in labour and economic policies. An identical letter was sent to the ministries of labour, economy, trade, finance, treasury and planning in the countries of the region.⁴⁵ Each institution and ministry was asked to provide information on:

- Collaboration agreements between the institution/ministry and other sectoral ministries aimed at promoting gender equity in labour and economic policies;
- Agreements for interinstitutional collaboration on specific projects and programmes designed to improve the labour-economic situation of women;
- Intersectoral bodies and mechanisms (working groups, commissions, forums, coordinators, advisers) established to improve equity between women and men in the labour and economic spheres (objectives, components, work plan, institutional framework, activity reports);
- Principal achievements within the institution/ministry since 1995 with regard to the promotion of gender equity in the policies, programmes and institutional structure of the labour and economic sectors.

The survey was sent to 39 national institutions for the promotion of gender equity in the region and 81 ministries in the labour and economic sectors. Response were received from 13 national institutions and 17 sectoral ministries.

In addition to the information obtained through this small survey, relevant information on the topic available from secondary sources was collected and systematized. These secondary sources included national plans for equality, journals and reports of the institutions and offices for the advancement of women, research and studies published by governmental and nongovernmental institutions, monitoring reports on the Beijing Platform for Action, reports on programmes and projects implemented in the countries and others.

The available information was collected and systematized on the basis of several institutional indicators derived from theories of institutional development and, more specifically, the guide used by Macdonald et al. to assess the degree of gender mainstreaming in an organization or institution.⁴⁶ The systematized information was then compiled in tables that reflect the situation in each country. The institutional components considered are:

- a) National objectives and commitments with regard to mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the labour and economic sectors, as expressed in:
 - national plans for equality of opportunities and treatment for women and men;
 - sectoral plans in the labour and economic spheres;
 - national plans for economic and labour development
- b) The existence of *sectoral and intersectoral mechanisms* within the government to promote gender equity in the labour and economic spheres, including the following:
 - Gender (or women's) units within sectoral ministries;
 - intersectoral committees on (1) gender issues in general; (2) gender issues in the economic and labour sectors; (3) gender indicators or statistics;

⁴⁵ Except in the Caribbean countries.

⁴⁶ Macdonald, M.; Springer, E.; Dubel, I. *Gender and Organizational Change. Bridging the Gap between Policy and Practice*. The Netherlands: Royal Tropical Institute; 1997.

- interinstitutional agreements between the national institutions for the advancement of women and ministries in the economic and labour sectors.
- c) Existing *legislation* relating to the promotion of equal opportunities and treatment for women and men in the economic and labour spheres:
- ratified international agreements and conventions relating to gender equity in the economic and labour sectors;
 - laws adopted or modified relating to gender equity in the economic and labour sectors;
 - programmes aimed at disseminating information and providing training on the economic and labour rights of women.
- d) The *projects and programmes* of greatest relevance to the topic under study, launched since 1996 for the promotion of gender equity in the labour and economic spheres and implemented by the national institution for the advancement of women and the sectoral ministries.
- e) Availability of *technical resources* to support the process of gender mainstreaming in economic and labour policies, such as:
- sources of statistical information and databases disaggregated by sex;
 - technical instruments for training public officials and sensitizing the general public.
- f) Other institutional components: financial resources; human resources, institutional culture and external context.

In June 2000, preliminary national tables were prepared by the Woman and Development Unit and were sent to the national institutions for the advancement of women in the region, which were asked to review, correct and add to the information collected. At the conclusion of the assessment (15 November 2000), 10 national tables with revisions and additions by the countries had been received. This information was added to the prior information in order to carry out the analysis presented here.

It should be emphasized that the analysis was based on information provided by the governments and more specifically by the national institutions for the advancement of women and some sectoral ministries. The indicators of gender mainstreaming utilized here are mainly indicators of “political will”: they reveal the extent to which the governments are committed to gender equity and they provide information about the efforts that are being made to fulfil that commitment. These are largely qualitative variables that describe and provide an approximate measure of the phenomenon under study (ECLAC, 1999b:21). To obtain a more complete picture of the situation they would need to be supplemented with outcome indicators.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Outcome indicators measure the results of the various processes and interventions carried out with a view to achieving a specific goal. These are quantitative indicators of measures that express the degree of success as a percentage or number achieved or a rate of variation. The importance of gender indicators for the formulation and evaluation of economic and labour policies is underscored in Chapter 5 of this report (see pp. 36–41).

Table B.1

**RESPONSES TO THE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND SECTORAL MINISTRIES**

	National institution for the advancement of women		Sectoral ministries
	Response 1999	Response 2000	Response 1999
Argentina		15/08/2000	• Ministry of Labour and Social Security: 07/1999
Belize		12/09/2000	
Bolivia		05/07/2000	• Ministry of Finance – Office of the Undersecretary for Public Investment and External Financing: 28/09/1999
			• Ministry of Economic Development
			– Office of the Undersecretary of Sectoral Coordination: 20/09/1999
			– Office of the Undersecretary of Energy and Hydrocarbons: 10/09/1999
			– Office of the Undersecretary of Industry and Domestic Trade: 13/09/1999
			– Office of the Undersecretary of Mines and Metallurgy: 15/09/1999
			• Ministry of Transport, Communications and Civil Aeronautics: 18/08/1999
Brazil	27/07/1999		
Chile	23/08/1999	07/07/2000	• Ministry of Economy: 09/09/1999
Colombia			• Ministry of Finance and Public Credit: 09/09/1999
			• Ministry of Economic Development: 09/09/1999
			• Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce: 16/08/1999
Costa Rica	11/10/1999		
Cuba	14/09/1999	19/07/2000	
Dominica	19/08/1999	01/09/2000	
Dominican Republic		22/08/2000	
Ecuador	13/12/1999	14/07/2000	• Ministry of Labour and Human Resources – Office of the Undersecretary for Human Resources and Employment: 19/08/1999
El Salvador		15/08/2000	• Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare: 28/09/1999
Guatemala		07/08/2000	• Ministry of Economy – National Council for the Development of Microenterprise and Small Business: 17/09/1999
			• Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare: 7/09/1999
Honduras		23/08/2000	• Ministry of Labour and Social Security: 01/09/1999
			• Ministry of Industry and Commerce: 11/11/1999
Mexico	01/09/99	04/08/2000 20/10/2000	• Banco de México: 02/09/1999
			• Ministry of Finance and Public Credit, Department of International Financial Affairs: 10/12/1999
Netherlands Antilles	03/08/1999		
Nicaragua			• Ministry of Development, Industry and Commerce: 03/09/1999
Panama	10/08/1999		
Paraguay	31/08/1999		
Peru		17/07/2000	
Suriname	28/07/1999		
Uruguay	09/08/1999	20/07/2000	
Venezuela	27/07/1999		

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