

Bridges for gender equality between Latin America and the Caribbean and Germany

Criteria for implementing the German feminist development cooperation policy in synergy with the Regional Gender Agenda of Latin America and the Caribbean

Ana Güzmes García



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**Criteria for implementing the German feminist
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with the Regional Gender Agenda
of Latin America and the Caribbean**

Ana Güzmes García



This document was coordinated by Ana Gúezmes García, Chief of the Division for Gender Affairs of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), who was in charge of its drafting, with the support of Romane Wohlschies, Camila Bustos and Tamara Drove, from the same division, and with inputs from the consultants Devanna de la Puente, Alejandra Faúndez and Brianda Romero.

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Introduction and background

In 1980, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ) formed a strategic alliance. That partnership has been strengthened since 2003, with the implementation of biannual ECLAC-BMZ/GIZ cooperation programmes covering such key areas as social, economic and environmental development and the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Germany, as an important player in international development cooperation, contributes its experience to ECLAC intergovernmental and technical forums. In addition, dialogue with ECLAC complements Germany's bilateral commitments to regional and transnational challenges and contributions and to the development of regional public goods, providing a platform for political discussion on leading sustainable development challenges. The issue of gender equality is addressed in the BMZ position paper *Shaping development with Latin America and the Caribbean: partnerships for ecological transformation and social justice*, which covers the joint learning of Germany and ECLAC about feminist policies and movements through policy dialogues and think tanks (BMZ, 2023b, p. 19).

Latin America and the Caribbean today face a series of crises that threaten to deepen historical structural inequalities. A low-growth trend that affects fiscal space and the potential for decent employment is compounded by other crises, such as in the environmental and care realms, and by structural inequalities that disproportionately affect women (ECLAC, 2024j), particularly those who face multiple and interrelated forms of discrimination, such as rural, Indigenous and Afrodescendent women, women with disabilities and those in situations of human mobility. Women report higher levels of poverty and lower rates of labour participation than men, and one of the main obstacles to their economic autonomy is unpaid and care work, a responsibility that falls mostly on women (Vaca-Trigo, 2019) (see infographic 1).

ECLAC has determined that Latin America and the Caribbean faces three development traps: a low-growth trap; another involving high inequality, low social mobility and weak social cohesion; and a third caused by low institutional capacities and weak governance. These three traps are obstacles to building a more productive, inclusive and sustainable future; as a result, the region can be said to face a development crisis (ECLAC, 2024h). ECLAC has therefore proposed a series of transformations that are needed in the region's development models, and one of those transformations is moving towards gender equality and the care society (ECLAC, 2024h).

In recent decades, the region has made significant progress with gender equality in terms of legislation with the enactment of laws addressing such issues as gender violence, child marriage, wage discrimination and parity rules to advance women's participation. While progress has been made with the institutional architecture for gender in the different branches of government, the region still faces challenges in implementing and financing equality policies. ECLAC has therefore said that the time has come to make the strategic investments and implement the public policies needed to advance towards substantive gender equality in practice and towards the care society.

In this regard, the region is not starting from scratch: Latin America and the Caribbean is notable as the only region in the world to have a United Nations intergovernmental regional body focusing on this issue since 1977: the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Over half a century, ECLAC member States have held 15 meetings of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and have agreed on an ambitious, profound, comprehensive and cumulative Regional Gender Agenda, which guides the countries' public policies in pursuit of gender equality, the rights of women, adolescents and girls in all their diversity, women's autonomy and the region's sustainable development (ECLAC, 2023c). The Conference is a subsidiary body of ECLAC and, since 2020, it is organized in coordination with UN-Women. It enjoys broad participation by the region's governments, the United Nations system, international organizations, academia and civil society organizations, particularly women's and feminist movements (ECLAC, 2024d).

Latin America and the Caribbean also has a long tradition of contributions by feminists and feminism to multilateralism, sustainable development and peace and this, together with the efforts of governments and multilateral organizations, has nurtured a regional and global network of human rights instruments, rules, institutions and policies dedicated to achieving gender equality and upholding women's rights.

As Güezmes and Romero (2024, p. 10) note:

When the United Nations was created in 1945, diplomats Bertha Lutz of Brazil and Minerva Bernardino of the Dominican Republic were the key women who, acting from the South, secured the inclusion of the phrases "equal rights of men and women" and "the dignity and worth of the human person" in the preamble of the United Nations Charter. Milestones such as the first United Nations World Conference on Women, held in Mexico in 1975, the subsequent adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the inauguration of the Regional Conferences on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in Cuba in 1979 attest to this renewed momentum. It was also the region that adopted the first binding treaty, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994), which recognizes violence against women as a human rights violation.

Over the past decade, there has been a trend towards the emergence and growth of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy. This has been especially notable in Latin America and the Caribbean, where three countries from the global South—Mexico, Chile and Colombia—have joined this trend.

Similarly, "the countries of the region have worked actively in global and regional forums to integrate gender equality as a guiding principle and pillar into global agreements on climate change, sustainable development, migration, financing for development, human rights, peace and security, international cooperation and international trade, among other topics, which shows that no area of foreign policy is gender-neutral and that women's full and equal participation remains a work in progress everywhere" (Güezmes and Romero, 2024, p. 10).

Latin America and the Caribbean offers an opportunity for renewing multilateralism through the global, regional, national and local contributions that feminist policies for foreign affairs and international development cooperation can make to overcome the structural challenges of gender inequality and

sustainable development. The implementation of feminist cooperation policies could usher in a more productive, inclusive and sustainable future with substantive equality. To achieve this, in addition to establishing principles, feminist policies will need to move to create a State institutional framework and provide for adequate budgets, action measures, clear process and impact indicators and effective participation, evaluation and accountability mechanisms (Güezmes and Romero, 2024).

At the end of 2021, Annalena Baerbock, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, announced that the country was to adopt a feminist foreign policy and, to that end, would begin a process of consultations with international partners, experts and civil society representatives. She also noted that inputs from Federal Foreign Office staff, both in Germany and abroad, would be crucial in developing such a strategy (Federal Foreign Office of Germany, 2023a). Synergistically, Svenja Schulze, the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, announced in 2021 that BMZ was to pursue a feminist international development cooperation policy in order to eliminate structural inequalities and discrimination caused by racist structures and unequal power relations (BMZ, 2023a). The planning and development phase of these two complementary policies took place in 2022. In early March 2023, Germany's Federal Foreign Office published a document setting out guidelines for the feminist foreign policy announced at the end of 2021 (Federal Foreign Office of Germany, 2023b). This policy is intended to conduct transformative gender work and balance principles and pragmatism, confronting the dilemmas of foreign policy and focusing its energies on gender equality and human security to promote a cultural shift in foreign policy. An important part of this approach is promoting the three Rs—rights, representation and resources—originally defined in the feminist foreign policy adopted by Sweden (Federal Foreign Office of Germany, 2023b).

Additionally, in early March 2023, BMZ published the *Feminist Development Policy: For Just and Strong Societies Worldwide* (BMZ, 2023a); this was followed by its Third Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality (2023–27) (BMZ, 2023c), which focuses on guaranteeing women's human rights and on "overcoming the structural and systemic causes behind the lack of equality by taking into account the intersectionality of discrimination's different characteristics so that all people can participate equally and autonomously in social, political and economic life". BMZ also focuses on the three Rs (rights, resources and representation) (BMZ, 2023a, p. 6). Prior to drafting the document, an extensive consultation process was held with civil society organizations and experts from the global North and South. The strategy was also coordinated with the German Federal Foreign Office and other ministries (BMZ, 2023b). According to BMZ, the feminist international development cooperation policy will be anti-colonial and anti-racist, gender transformative and intersectional. The text also recognizes the differential effects of climate change and biodiversity loss on women, particularly on account of the disproportionate burden of care work that falls on them. Furthermore, given its coordinating and organizing capacity, and in order to increase support for feminist international development cooperation policies, the ministry will specifically pursue partnerships with multilateral forums, development banks, international funds and working groups, in order to mobilize resources in support of civil society (Güezmes and Romero, 2024).

With regard to budget issues, BMZ has undertaken to ensure that by 2025, 93% of the funds available for new projects will be allocated to those that promote gender equality. This target includes 85% of funds for projects where gender equality is a significant objective and 8% for projects where gender equality is the main objective (BMZ, 2023b). In comparison, the ministry reported that the corresponding figure in 2021 was close to 64%.

In the field of international cooperation, by 2021 German feminist international policies had already surpassed those of the other members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in terms of the amount of official development assistance devoted to activities that included, significantly and primarily, the gender perspective. In relative terms, until 2021 Germany ranked below several countries with similar objectives, allocating only 50% of its official development assistance to projects where gender equality was a main or significant objective (OECD, 2023b). This figure must be seen in light of the fact that Germany is one of the few countries in the

global North that meets the target of devoting 0.7% of its GDP to international development cooperation, together with the commitment to increase the budget by 2025 (BMZ, 2023b).

As a result of the commitment to develop a truly transformative feminist international development cooperation policy assumed by BMZ, in 2022 the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the ECLAC Division for Gender Affairs agreed to begin cooperating to reorient Germany's international development cooperation strategy with Latin America and the Caribbean. The main objective of the project "Success criteria for a feminist development cooperation policy specific to Latin America and the Caribbean" is to draft recommendations and define criteria to reconfigure German bilateral official development assistance so as to align it with the timescales and objectives that the region has set for itself on the issues of gender equality and women's rights and autonomy through the Regional Gender Agenda (ECLAC, 2023c). To this end, the German cooperation authorities and ECLAC have organized various workshops, events and meetings, attended by government representatives from Germany and Latin American and Caribbean countries, ECLAC officials and members of civil society organizations, particularly women's and feminist organizations and think tanks.

Those occasions have included discussions on the criteria and priorities to be taken into account in Germany's international cooperation activities towards implementing the Regional Gender Agenda. One such strategic dialogue session took place during a side event at the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Buenos Aires in November 2022 (ECLAC, 2022a). The ECLAC Division for Gender Affairs was also represented at the German Week on Latin America and the Caribbean, in the discussion session "Designing a feminist policy for development cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Expert dialogue with Minister Svenja Schulze", held in March 2023 (ECLAC, 2023a). With the help of a German think tank, ECLAC and GIZ analysed the portfolio of German cooperation projects with gender objectives implemented in selected Latin American and Caribbean countries between 2017 and 2022, in order to present BMZ with recommendations on opportunities for improvement. This was the first time that a North-South cooperation initiative with Latin America and the Caribbean explicitly sought to align a country's cooperation policy with the Regional Gender Agenda agreed upon over the last 47 years within the framework of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. One successful milestone based on the recommendation to align Germany cooperation in the region with the priorities of the Regional Gender Agenda is a regional project with ECLAC on the care economy (2024), the aim of which is to advance towards the care society that the region agreed to pursue in the Buenos Aires Commitment (2022). Thus, this is the first ECLAC-BMZ/GIZ Strategic Alliance project where gender equality is the main objective.

The project "Success criteria for a feminist development cooperation policy specific to Latin America and the Caribbean", launched in 2022, is taking place in a challenging context. The region faces multiple, cascading and interconnected crises that threaten to deepen historical structural inequalities (ECLAC, 2023b). In addition, many of the region's countries face high levels of public debt, while the region is not among the priority destinations for international cooperation and other types of financing. In light of that inequality, it is necessary to act with a sense of urgency and raise the scale of ambition and efforts at the regional and international levels.

BMZ is responding to this context by strengthening its cooperation with Latin American and Caribbean countries to address global challenges and learn from the region's experiences and knowledge. BMZ recognizes the importance of considering the region's specific needs in the design of an effective feminist development cooperation policy for Latin America and the Caribbean. This is therefore a timely moment to undertake feminist international development cooperation, in collaboration with ECLAC and the Division for Gender Affairs, as a strategic partner of BMZ.

I. International development cooperation policy in synergy with the Regional Gender Agenda of Latin America and the Caribbean

Significant progress has been made in integrating the gender perspective into international relations over the last five decades, especially since the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), together with other treaties, conventions and agreements that provide an international legal framework for protecting, upholding and ensuring the full human rights of women, adolescents and girls in all their diversity. Those instruments include the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), conventions adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) —in particular the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)— the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990), the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance (2013), the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance (2013), the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons (2015), and the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement, 2021).

Also significant are the global commitments made by States in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, the Pact for the Future (2024), and other intergovernmental agreements, which stipulate that gender equality, women's rights and autonomy, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women are an essential requirement for sustainable development.

The feminist perspective on cooperation also relates to financing for development and the international financial architecture, climate change, international migration and all the issues addressed by Our Common Agenda and the Pact for the Future at the United Nations for dealing with global, regional and local challenges. Thanks to the impetus of the global, regional and local mobilization of women's and feminist organizations, together with the international community's political will, a series of regional and international instruments in this area have been consolidated over recent decades.

As noted in the introduction, Latin America and the Caribbean is notable as the only region where, since 1977, governments, international agencies and civil society organizations—particularly women's and feminist organizations—have come together within the framework of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. This Conference has become a benchmark for dialogue and collective action, where governments have agreed on a profound, progressive and comprehensive Regional Gender Agenda that guides countries' public policies towards both formal and substantive gender equality, the guarantee of the rights of women, adolescents and girls in all their diversity, the exercise of their autonomy and sustainable development in the region's different national contexts. The Regional Gender Agenda operates in synergy with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda, and with international and regional human rights frameworks.

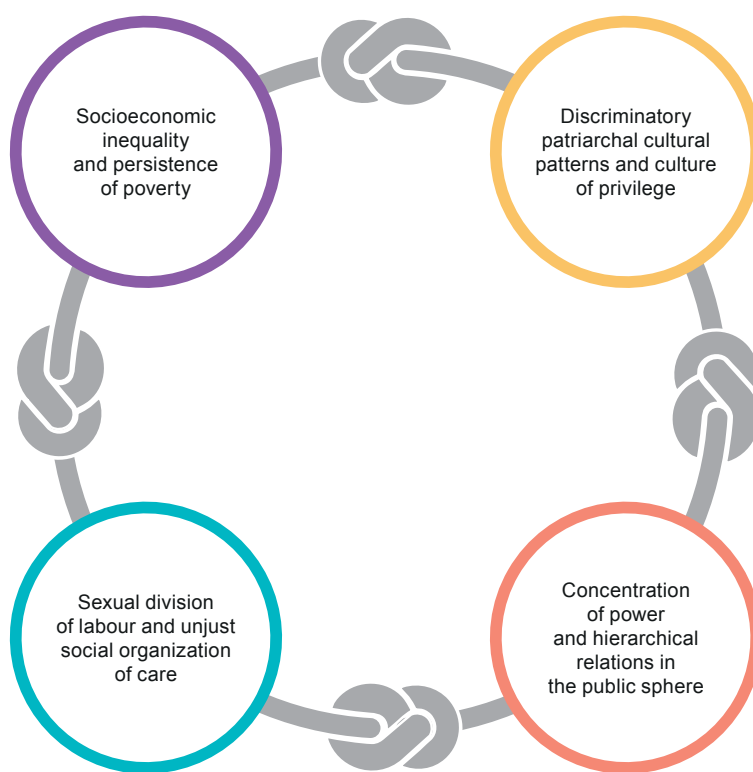
The most recent agreement in this area, the Buenos Aires Commitment, adopted in 2022 at the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, is now included among those that make up the Regional Gender Agenda. In the Buenos Aires Commitment, ECLAC member States undertook to promote North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation for the Agenda's implementation. The Commitment sets out fundamental agreements for addressing the structural causes of gender inequality, achieving a transformative recovery with gender equality oriented towards life sustainability, and moving towards a care society (ECLAC, 2023e). As noted above, ECLAC and BMZ/GIZ have since 2024 been conducting a regional project on the care economy to support the transition towards the care society by strengthening institutional capacities in the region's countries for the implementation of comprehensive care systems and policies.

The Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 (ECLAC, 2017), adopted in Uruguay in 2016 at the thirteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, is also of great importance: it aims to guide the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda and ensure that it is used as a road map for attaining the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional level from the perspectives of gender equality and women's autonomy and human rights. The region has identified four structural challenges that must be addressed: socioeconomic inequality and poverty; patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns and the culture of privilege; the sexual division of labour and the unjust social organization of care; and the concentration of power and hierarchical relations in the public arena (see diagram 1).

Official statistics from the region's countries (see infographic 1) have much to say about the characteristics of these structural challenges (ECLAC, 2024i). First, with respect to socioeconomic inequality

and the persistence of poverty in a context of exclusionary growth, it must be noted that inequality of opportunities is seen at both the individual and household levels. Thus, the statistics for household poverty show that in 2023, for every 100 men living in poor households in the region, there were 121 women in the same situation (ECLAC, 2024j). This is closely related to people's ability to generate their own incomes: in 2023, 26.3% of the region's women had no individual monetary income of any kind, compared to 10.1% of men.¹ In turn, those results relate to labour market and employment participation rates: in 2023,² the former was 74.2% among men and 51.8% among women, while the respective employment rates³ were 70.2% and 47.8% and the unemployment rates stood at 5.4% and 7.7%. This inequality also impacts the income of employed women: in 2022, for every 100 United States dollars that men received in labour income, women received 76.

Diagram 1
Structural challenges of gender inequality



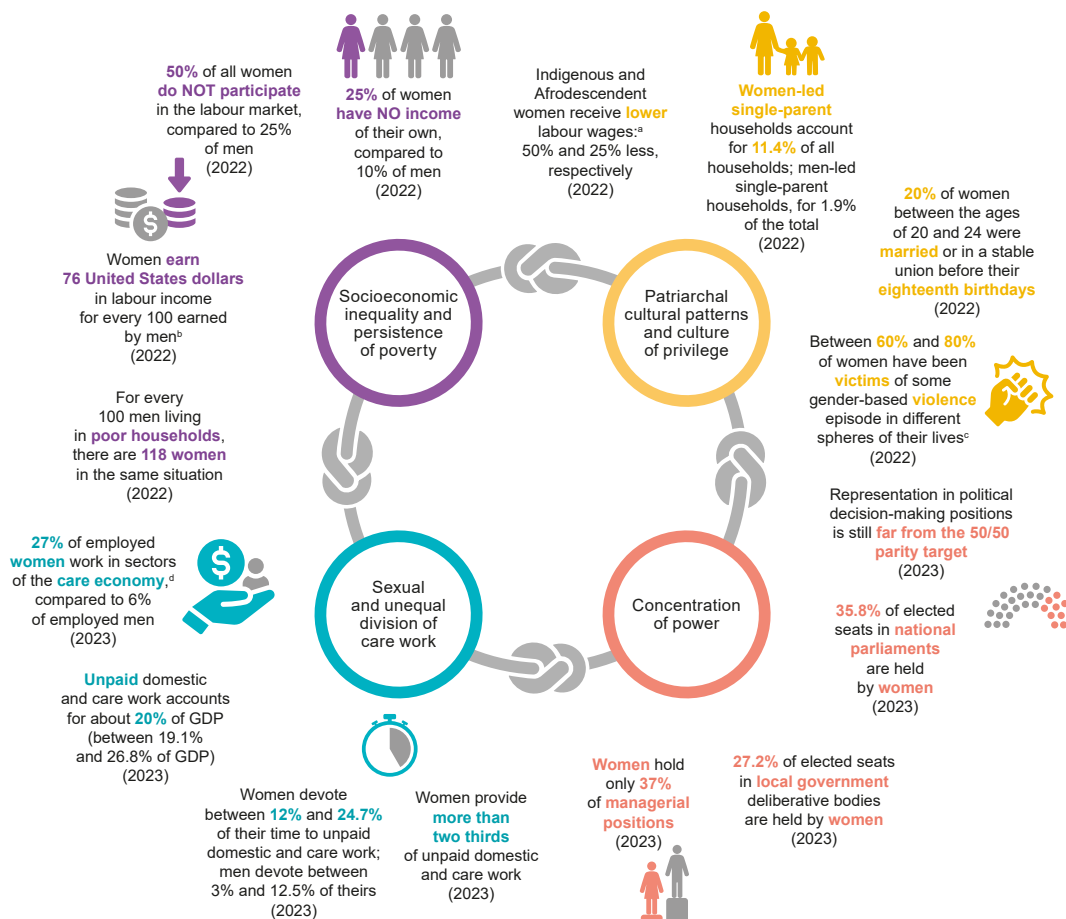
Source: Prepared by the author.

¹ See Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Population without own income, by sex, age group and area" [online] https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/databank/index.html?lang=es&indicator_id=3343&lang=en.

² See Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Labor force participation rate, by sex" [online] https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/databank/index.html?lang=es&indicator_id=2470&lang=en.

³ See Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Employment rate by sex" [online] https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/databank/index.html?lang=es&indicator_id=2471&lang=en.

Infographic 1 Latin America and the Caribbean: selected data on the structural challenges of gender inequality



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean; CEPALSTAT [online database] <https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/index.html?lang=en>; Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG); Repository of information on time use in Latin America and the Caribbean; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean/United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (ECLAC/UN-Women), *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Regional Gender Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean: gender indicators up to 2023* (LC/TS.2024/19), Santiago, 2024.

^a In United States dollars at purchasing power parity (PPP).

^b Hourly income in United States dollars at purchasing power parity (PPP).

^c According to data from those countries with prevalence studies: the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

^d The care economy sector comprises the health, education and domestic service (households as employers) sectors of economic activity.

The situation described above is closely related to the second structural challenge, the sexual division of labour and the unfair organization of care, which is manifested in differences in participation in unpaid domestic and care work. Women spend three times as much time as men on this type of work, which sustains life and the economy: women dedicate between 12% and 25% of their time to tasks of this kind, while men spend between 3% and 13%. Unpaid domestic and care work represents between 19% and 27% of GDP in the region's countries, and 74% of it is performed by women. In 2023, 56.3% of the women outside the labour market in Latin American countries were engaged exclusively in unpaid domestic and care work, compared to 7.3% of men (ECLAC, 2024j).

Patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns and the persistence of the culture of privilege—which make up another of the structural challenges—are seen in such harmful practices as child marriage: in 2022, one in five women aged 20–24 were either married or in a stable union before

their eighteenth birthdays. In addition, according to data from countries with violence prevalence studies, in 2022, between 60% and 80% of women reported having been victims of gender-based violence at some point in their lives and in different settings. Moreover, in 2023, at least 3,897 women were victims of femicide in 27 Latin American countries and Caribbean territories, representing at least 11 violent gender-related deaths of women every day (ECLAC, 2024k).

Lastly, as regards the concentration of power and hierarchical relations in the public sphere, the region is far from parity in women's political representation. First, 2023 data show an average representation rate of women in elected seats in the region's national parliaments of 36%, and one of 27% in local governments. That situation underscores the need to pursue measures for women's political participation and to incorporate a gender perspective into decision-making at the local level.

The region's countries have worked actively on promoting the Regional Gender Agenda in global and regional forums in order to incorporate gender equality as a guiding principle and axis of global agreements on topics such as climate change, sustainable development, migration, development financing, human rights, peace and security, international cooperation and international trade. This shows that there is no area of foreign or cooperation policy that is gender neutral and that the full participation of women under conditions of equality is still a pending task for the world.

To achieve a transformative recovery in a context of multidimensional and cascading crises and the unsustainability of the development model in Latin America and the Caribbean, as ECLAC has repeatedly pointed out, the contributions of the region's countries through feminist foreign and international cooperation policies with gender equality and the autonomy of women and girls at the centre could drive a more productive, inclusive and sustainable future with substantive equality.

International development cooperation policies, in synergy with the Regional Gender Agenda of Latin America and the Caribbean, must translate into substantive and measurable changes that favour the full social, political and economic participation of women, in all their diversity, as well as the exercise of their right to a life free of violence and the States' reinforced commitment to gender equality. These policies are not only focused on values and principles: they must also make progress in identifying sufficient resources and specific measures consistent with the women's rights framework and international human rights agreements and in establishing clear impact indicators and effective participation, evaluation and accountability mechanisms (Güezmes and Romero, 2024).

II. Spaces for multi-stakeholder reflection and exchanges as a result of cooperation between BMZ/GIZ and the ECLAC Division for Gender Affairs

The project “Success criteria for a feminist development cooperation policy specific to Latin America and the Caribbean”, carried out by ECLAC together with GIZ and financed by BMZ to advance feminist cooperation for Latin America and the Caribbean, involved the generation of outcomes and forums for multi-stakeholder reflection and exchange. To that end, various spaces for political dialogue and reflection were established.

This dialogue began in the city of Buenos Aires on 9 November 2022, when the side event “Feminist development cooperation policies” (ECLAC, 2022c) was held on the occasion of the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its main objectives were to provide a space for exchanges among Latin American, Caribbean and European countries that are designing or implementing foreign and cooperation policies for feminist development and to promote North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives in pursuit of gender equality, women’s autonomy and women’s human rights, as well as to move towards a care society, as agreed by the ECLAC member States in the Buenos Aires Commitment. Ana Gúezmes García, Chief of the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC, concluded the event by saying that the region required a structural change to move towards the care society as proposed at the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and to do so with a sense of urgency, a change of era as proposed by feminist approaches, and with a profound transformation of the organization of society focused on the sustainability of life, development and peace. In her introductory remarks, Christine Toetzke, the BMZ Director General for Asia, Southeast and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Latin America, said that for Germany, the purpose of feminist development policy is to create societies of free and equal people who enjoy equal opportunities to participate in economic, social and political life. She also identified the goal of raising the profile of care work and of incorporating it fully and with dignity into economic systems.

Another key milestone in this strategic partnership took place from 27 to 31 March 2023, when BMZ organized the German Week on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2023a), which was held at various locations in Berlin and was opened by BMZ Federal Minister Svenja Schulze, together with the

Vice President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Eduardo Ferrer Mac-Gregor Poisot. Events were held on topics germane to feminist development policy, in which ECLAC also participated. One of the highlights was the dialogue between BMZ Federal Minister Svenja Schulze and the Chief of the Division for Gender Affairs, Ana Güzmes, on the feminist reorientation of development cooperation policy and its challenges and criteria for success, which took place during the event titled “Designing a feminist policy for development cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean”. In her speech, Ana Güzmes stressed that international cooperation policies or foreign policies that style themselves as feminist must be transformative. She said that thanks to the momentum of the global and local women’s movement, as well as the political will of more and more governments and the international community, recent decades had seen the consolidation of rules, institutions and policies dedicated to gender equality and women’s rights from a feminist perspective (ECLAC, 2023a). That was the development cooperation needed in the twenty-first century. Applying a gender and feminist perspective was essential for a just transition, the response to climate change, the international financial architecture and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its social, economic and environmental dimensions. In turn, Minister Svenja Schulze stressed the importance of focusing on the three Rs—rights, resources and representation—as a framework for ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women in society. She also emphasized the need to anchor a feminist perspective in the ministry’s portfolio, recognizing the fundamental role of women and girls, and of marginalized groups, in decision-making processes. The Minister also emphasized the importance of strengthening feminist cooperation policies through international alliances, such as the partnership with ECLAC. Lastly, she underscored the importance of the ministry setting a good example in terms of institutional structure, promoting gender equality and ensuring an organizational culture of inclusion and equality (ECLAC, 2023a).

Between March and September 2023, three meetings of experts were held through a sounding board to address and deepen the understanding of German feminist cooperation in the region and, at the same time, contribute to reflection as part of the regional study of the portfolio of German cooperation implemented by GIZ in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition to ECLAC and GIZ, the institutions that participated in these events were the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, the German Institute of Development and Sustainability, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, and the Inclusión y Equidad consultancy. The contributions presented dealt with different thematic and methodological topics. From the thematic perspective, the main following topics were addressed: economic, social and cultural rights as regards the need to strengthen linkages between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development; gender equality and the exercise of autonomy by addressing the various manifestations of violence and discrimination against women; women’s physical autonomy and sexual and reproductive rights; and women’s economic autonomy and the feminization of poverty. The meetings also discussed international relations, the institutional architecture for the implementation of feminist foreign relations and cooperation policies, the decolonization of the North-South and South-South relationship, together with other topics. Regarding methodological issues, there was also an interesting dialogue on approaches to project formulation; emphasizing transformative issues in projects and the formats for their presentation and formulation; broadening the civic space in formulation processes (inclusion of civil society, the private sector, new masculinities); the importance of definitions of concepts, terminology and inclusive language in projects; installed capacities and gender expertise in institutions for assisting the technical teams; and other issues.

The Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC also participated in panel 2 of the VII Regional Conference on Trilateral Cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean 2024: “Overcoming Obstacles, Building Bridges” (GIZ, 2024a), titled “Accelerating the Achievement of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean”. At that event, it was noted that although the region’s countries have made progress in gender equality, it remains a structural challenge that requires concrete responses, particularly through the creation of a care society that prioritizes people’s well-being. Thus, trilateral and South-South cooperation were identified as essential tools for promoting gender equality through concrete feminist public development policies from an intersectional approach. In line with a structural

transformation, the event further noted that incorporating the gender perspective into all aspects of international cooperation required progress with gender mainstreaming. At the same time, in connection with the financial architecture, the need to increase investment efforts in these initiatives was also discussed. Finally, the countries were called on to build alliances through trilateral cooperation, as this type of cooperation contributes to exchanges of resources and learning, and through collaboration with multiple actors: not only governments, but also the private sector, communities and civil society.

To summarize, all these opportunities for policy dialogue and exchanges of experiences, reflections, lessons learned and good practices strengthened the partnership between BMZ/GIZ and ECLAC and enabled the production of a set of recommendations for joint learning and the interconnection of multiple actors.

As a result of this collaboration, contributions were also made to the document “Ten years of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy: an opportunity for Latin America and the Caribbean” (Güezmes and Romero, 2024), with the support of several donors of the Division for Gender Affairs, including BMZ. It analyses the emergence and evolution of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy in 12 countries, with an emphasis on Latin America and the Caribbean and its significant contribution to the Regional Gender Agenda, based on the history of feminist contributions to peace, multilateralism and intergovernmental agreements. It also identifies the need to move from formal to substantive equality through a rights-based strategy focused on representation, resources, reality checks, research, resilience and results, which together make up the “seven Rs” of a feminist foreign policy (Güezmes and Romero, 2024). The study provides a historical analysis, identifies promising practices and offers a guide for the implementation of policies that place equality and the sustainability of life and the planet at the centre of foreign and international cooperation policy, offering a hopeful perspective towards the care society and sustainable and gender-equitable development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

As the document states, “the implementation of feminist foreign and cooperation policies could usher in a more productive, inclusive and sustainable future with substantive equality” (Güezmes and Romero, 2024, p. 11). To achieve this, in addition to establishing principles, feminist policies must move towards their institutionalization within the State, set adequate budgets, action measures, clear process and impact indicators, and effective mechanisms for participation, evaluation and accountability. For this reason, recommendations must be produced for advancing towards the achievement of gender equality, the guaranteeing of all the human rights of women in all their diversity, the exercise of their autonomy and sustainable development.

III. Analysis of the BMZ project portfolio implemented by GIZ in connection with the Regional Gender Agenda

The portfolio analysis studies jointly carried out by GIZ and the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC are part of a shared applied research project intended to produce knowledge and recommendations on success criteria for a German feminist development cooperation policy in Latin America and the Caribbean. They seek to establish linkages between the Regional Gender Agenda and the German cooperation portfolio in the region. The methodology chosen entails the review of project documents, semi-structured interviews with key actors and workshops with teams from GIZ, the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau⁴ and German political foundations. The main thematic focuses, approaches, gaps and opportunities were identified to enable German cooperation projects to work on transforming the structural challenges of gender inequality in the region and to connect with the agreements entered into by the ECLAC member States in the Regional Gender Agenda.

In 2022, a pilot study was carried out on the GIZ portfolio in Colombia and Peru as a first step in analysing the incorporation of the gender perspective and the agreements set out in the Regional Gender Agenda into development cooperation projects in the region. That analysis was later extended to bilateral projects with Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and to regional projects with the Caribbean Community, ECLAC, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization and the Central American Integration System, with the aim of assessing the extent to which the projects incorporate the gender perspective in a cross-cutting manner in all stages and phases of the project cycle (assessment, formulation, implementation and evaluation). Both studies identified success factors and good practices, in light of institutional mandates and guidelines and of the pillars of the Montevideo Strategy and the agreements that make up the ECLAC Regional Gender Agenda. This research was conducted between late 2022 and September 2023, using combined qualitative and quantitative research methods.

⁴ The Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau is the German reconstruction credit bank, a development finance institution majority-owned by the Government of Germany. Its central role is the financing of economic, social and environmental development projects at the national and international levels. In the context of this research, the bank works with GIZ on joint initiatives to promote sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean and is a key player in the implementation of development aid programmes and projects. See [online] <https://www.kfw.de/About-KfW>.

Notable results of the studies in relation to the agreements that make up the Regional Gender Agenda include the following:

A. Strategic gender-related contents and analytical framework of projects

The projects analysed reported progress with identifying gender inequalities, especially in the preparation phase, using analytical frameworks consistent with international standards. The existence of internal strategies, such as the GIZ gender strategy, has been an important success factor, as they considerably influence the content and implementation of development cooperation through projects and programmes. It is also useful for projects to be able to draw on global concepts and guidelines that show how the gender perspective can be incorporated into the priority sectors of German development cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the formulation stage, however, there is a need for greater coordination with the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda in the different Latin American and Caribbean priority areas of BMZ.

The projects refer to approaches such as human rights and intersectionality, and these are issues that need to be developed in terms of practical application in project implementation. As regards rights and autonomy, the inclusion of the analysis of women's autonomy in its three dimensions—in decision-making, and in the economic and physical arenas, according to the different problems and issues addressed by the projects—has been positive.

B. Project formulation and management

The benefits of adopting standardized forms in the projects undertaken was noted. The existence of forms, instructions and guidelines has been a very important facilitating element for the inclusion of the gender approach in all project phases. In addition, there is a need to explore measures that go beyond the established indicators.

In most of the projects, the diagnostic phase is the most successful as regards the incorporation of the gender approach, given that there are factors that facilitate its inclusion: hired staff with expertise in the field, instruments for gender analysis, focal points trained in gender analysis in each country, information available for disaggregated analysis, and a practice of differentiated situation analysis that has been systematically included by GIZ as a requirement in recent years. In the implementation phase, however, the gender approach has not been incorporated systematically. Reasons for this include the limited availability of documentation and the lack of specific monitoring and evaluation tools with a gender perspective. Accordingly, the development of such tools is required, in order to promote accountability and continuous learning as systematically proposed in the agreements adopted under the aegis of the Regional Gender Agenda.

The availability of disaggregated data and gender and intersectional analysis is key to the effective development of gender policies and strategies, as established by the Regional Gender Agenda. Using those data, correlations can be understood and strategies to address inequalities can be devised. To this end, the availability and accessibility of national statistics and data must be improved across the region. In so doing, it could be useful to incorporate existing data sources, such as the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, and make them available internally in design process and externally to partners so they can improve their capacity for gender analysis. Sex-differentiated data collection and gender analysis should be further integrated into all components of development cooperation.

Lastly, as regards project analysis, emphasis is placed on the importance of financing and the need to strengthen budget allocations for activities that involve overcoming gender inequalities. Gender equality must be understood as a development objective to which all projects in all priority areas must contribute. There is therefore a need to reorient the available funds to comply with the gender priorities established in the projects, to guarantee greater funding for projects with the main objective of promoting gender equality, and to explore strategies such as gender-focused budgeting and gender markers to improve project effectiveness. These actions represent an opportunity to align the strategies established in the Regional Gender Agenda as regards their funding.

C. Leadership and institutional management

The ongoing progress with incorporating gender issues and the gender approach into BMZ projects in the region was acknowledged by all the actors interviewed. This process has evolved from general guidelines in the initial stages to concrete tools and the explicit requirement in force at present to include a gender perspective in all cooperation project phases. The obligation to comply with specific guidelines, the existence of specific tools and the allocation of time and budget to specialized professionals are essential elements in this process.

Although the presence of methodological tools has a positive impact on the inclusion of the gender approach, the interviews indicated the need to strengthen training on the gender approach for all professionals, and for the focal points, in order to facilitate the understanding of how those tools are used and the development of impactful gender indicators that are comparable in quality and usefulness with indicators from other sectors and in line with the agreements adopted in the Regional Gender Agenda.

In that context, both the formal establishment and role of the gender focal points in the countries play a crucial role in mainstreaming the gender perspective in all project stages, both in the teams' internal work processes and monitoring and in external work processes. In order for focal points' contributions to have an impact on the decision-making process, their responsibilities must be adequately defined and they must be equipped with the necessary level of seniority and influence to be able to carry them out.

The leadership role of decision makers and their continuous support remain a fundamental pillar for the successful implementation of the gender perspective in projects and programmes. Those actors have progressed in their understanding of the new priorities and importance of the gender agenda in cooperation, and it is necessary to ensure their permanent involvement in the pursuit of this agenda, a task that usually falls mainly on the gender focal points, who play a fundamental role in advising and assisting the leadership in that undertaking.

As for the staff involved in project management, greater awareness and support for the gender equality agenda were observed. Accordingly, the willingness of staff to work on this agenda at all levels can be further strengthened through continuous training, extending capacity-building to implementing organizations and establishing continuous learning structures. However, the shift in perspective from gender as a cross-cutting issue to gender equality as a main objective of development has not yet been fully realized. This transition could be reinforced through technical and awareness-raising support. Another option, as proposed by the Regional Gender Agenda in pursuit of substantive equality, is to include affirmative actions that promote decent work and the full, meaningful and equal participation of women in leadership positions: for example, in strategic sectors of the economy or in environmental projects.

D. Building alliances

In line with the commitments assumed in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Regional Gender Agenda, the region's governments have machineries for the advancement of women, with varying degrees of institutionalization and hierarchy, the purpose of which is to direct and coordinate gender equality policies and ensure that gender equality mainstreaming processes penetrate the entire structure of the State. In recent years, progress has been made in strengthening mechanisms for the advancement of women, especially in terms of their hierarchical position within the structure of States. Such mechanisms have been assigned statuses equivalent to that of a ministry or are led by minister-level officials who attend cabinet: a phenomenon seen mainly in Latin America and, to a lesser extent, in the Caribbean. Several countries have established gender equality mechanisms in sectoral ministries, such those responsible for the economy, the environment, infrastructure and foreign affairs, thereby reinforcing the institutional framework necessary for gender mainstreaming within the State. Progress has also been made with the creation of intersectoral coordination mechanisms for gender policies and women's rights at the national and subnational levels.

Proactively involving machineries for the advancement of women in development cooperation ensures that processes are aligned with international and national standards and practices for the inclusion of a gender approach. Hence, projects should collaborate more regularly with those mechanisms, which would also facilitate linkages with subsidiary bodies such as the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and the priorities of the Regional Gender Agenda. At the same time, the effective participation of civil society organizations in conducting analyses and as active programme and project subjects is key in guaranteeing that the priorities established by projects correspond to the strategic interests of women and to the advancement of their agendas in coordination with the counterpart cooperation agencies of the Government of Germany.

Civil society has played a leading role in the region, especially women's and feminist organizations and groups of women human rights defenders in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Montevideo Strategy recognizes citizen participation, particularly by women's and feminist organizations and movements, as a key pillar for the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda, policy follow-up and the strengthening of democracies in the region. The Buenos Aires Commitment calls for the promotion of exchanges and alliances among those organizations and between them and States to ensure progress towards the achievement of the objectives set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Regional Gender Agenda, fostering conditions for the participation by such organizations, addressing cultural and linguistic barriers, and identifying and securing funding sources (ECLAC, 2023e).

IV. Conclusions and recommendations for cooperation between Germany and Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of the Regional Gender Agenda

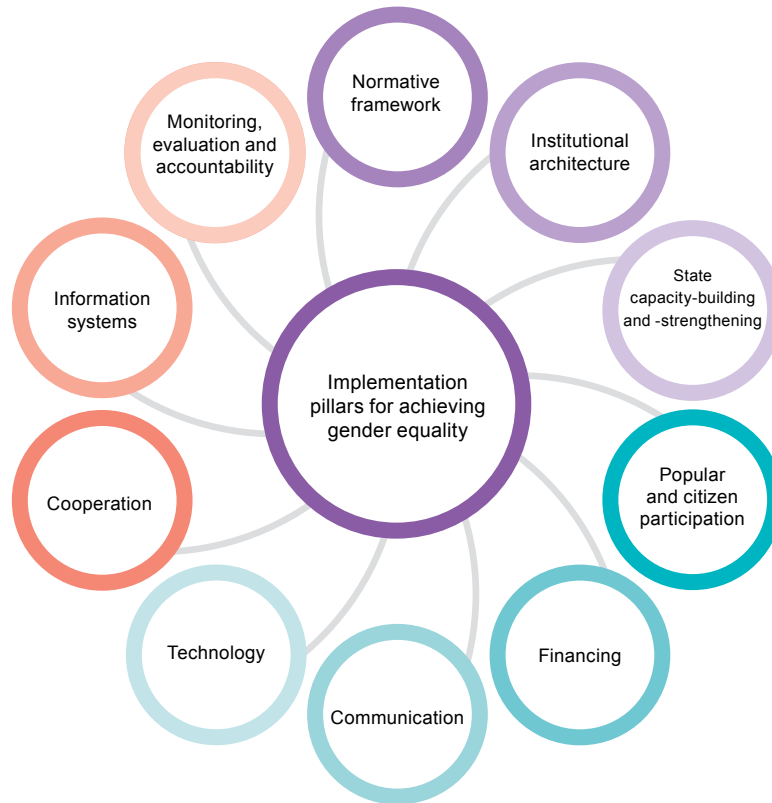
In its Feminist Development Policy strategy, BMZ (2023a) identifies four action areas to achieve the general objective of overcoming discriminatory power structures and, within them, defines the following specific objectives: enforcing the rights of women and marginalized groups, guaranteeing their access to resources and promoting their representation (action area 1), enshrining the feminist approach across its own project portfolio (action area 2), strengthening feminist development policy in international partnerships (action area 3), and continuously developing its own structures and ways of working in line with a feminist development policy based on reflection (action area 4). BMZ further elaborates on these action areas in its Third Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality (2023–27) (BMZ, 2023c), which describes measures linked to the commitments adopted by the regional instruments in the Regional Gender Agenda.

Particularly notable are the efforts made by German cooperation in Latin American and Caribbean countries to implement and enforce the agreements established by the ECLAC member States in the Regional Gender Agenda through tangible initiatives and projects, backed by budgets, defined goals and comprehensive tools, monitoring and accountability.

The existence of regional instruments such as the Montevideo Strategy, which is aimed at guiding ECLAC member States in pursuit of the Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Regional Gender Agenda, represents an operational leap forward and provides a valuable guide for those countries that, like Germany, seek to accelerate progress towards gender equality through international policies and prioritize the implementation and strengthening of sectoral and cross-cutting public policies aimed at guaranteeing substantive gender equality and the autonomy and human rights of women in all their diversity. Accordingly, addressing gender equality from the perspective of women's autonomy in its three dimensions (physical, economic and decision-making), in conjunction with overcoming the structural challenges of inequality described above, is a qualitative leap for the Regional Gender Agenda, which seeks to transform the systems and mechanisms that perpetuate gender inequality in the region.

The Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 was adopted by the ECLAC member States and sets out 74 measures across 10 implementation pillars: (1) normative framework, (2) institutional architecture, (3) participation, (4) capacity-building and -strengthening, (5) financing, (6) communication, (7) technology, (8) cooperation, (9) information systems, and (10) monitoring, evaluation and accountability (see diagram 2).

Diagram 2
Implementation pillars of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030* (LC/CRM.13/5), Santiago, 2017.

This chapter presents the following recommendations as key to the successful implementation of the German feminist development policy (BMZ, 2023a) and the corresponding Third Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality (2023–27) (BMZ, 2023c) for Latin America and the Caribbean. The recommendations are based on the analysis of the instruments and frameworks of foreign policy and international cooperation for feminist development contained in the publication “Ten years of feminist foreign policy and feminist international development cooperation policy: an opportunity for Latin America and the Caribbean” (Güezmes and Romero, 2024) and in the pilot and regional studies conducted by GIZ. In addition, the following recommendations are in line with the 10 implementation pillars of the Montevideo Strategy, together with the subsequent Santiago Commitment and Buenos Aires Commitment as part of the Regional Gender Agenda adopted by the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

A. Normative framework

The adoption of a feminist approach by the ministries responsible for foreign and development policy in Germany (Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) represents a major turning point and is fully aligned with pillar 1 (normative framework) of the Montevideo Strategy. In that context, the challenge is to further the institutionalization of this approach, thus ensuring that the feminist perspective becomes a State policy with the ability to survive changes of government.

The adoption of national laws that strengthen the objectives and instruments of feminist foreign and international development cooperation policies is an option for achieving tangible and sustainable changes, aligned with the substantive equality that the Montevideo Strategy seeks to promote. At the same time, the commitment to adopting, ratifying and upholding the international and regional normative framework on gender equality and women's and girls' human rights is in alignment with the objectives of pillar 1, "normative framework", of the Montevideo Strategy. This commitment implies implementing and systematically reporting on the enforcement of international conventions, agreements and consensuses at all levels and branches of government, thus contributing to progress towards substantive equality. Beyond those commitments, countries that advocate for feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies demonstrate their potential and commitment by continuing to develop agreements, consensuses and mechanisms that accelerate gender equality and the upholding of the rights of all women and girls. This is done through multilateral, regional and bilateral spaces, highlighting the consistency with the vision of the Montevideo Strategy.

In the current scenario of cascading crises, ECLAC-BMZ/GIZ cooperation plays a fundamental role in defining priorities, allocating resources and directing transformations, in keeping with the principles of mutual trust, horizontal exchange and collective learning. One additional challenge is for the feminist perspective to permeate all the institutional structures of German cooperation, ensuring that it is a cross-cutting issue in all cooperation undertakings as a main objective of cooperation, in line with pillar 1 of the Montevideo Strategy.

B. Institutional architecture

The consolidation of a feminist foreign and development cooperation policy as a fundamental pillar for structural transformation requires its institutionalization as a State policy. In addition to the normative framework, contributions to the institutional architecture can be made by a framework document or strategy that clarifies the essence of feminist foreign policy and feminist development cooperation and sets out political and technical goals and guidelines to facilitate the achievement of the set objectives in all areas of government. Not only does this process create synergy among internal efforts; it also provides a measurable standard for civil society—especially women's and feminist organizations—and the general public to evaluate progress and participate in accountability processes. Germany, like other countries that have moved in this direction, has adopted its *Feminist Development Policy: For Just and Strong Societies Worldwide* (BMZ, 2023a) and its Third Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality (2023–27), both by BMZ (2023c). This approach, which is aligned with the principles of pillar 2 of the Montevideo Strategy, seeks to establish solid institutional, administrative and legal anchors to ensure the durability of the political mandate, even when administrations change.

In that context, establishing a solid institutional architecture for feminist cooperation is essential. Progress in identifying priorities and setting a road map on the feminist perspective in cooperation and in all areas of development is a necessary objective. The training of technical and political officers to build narratives, proposals and tools to consolidate the feminist perspective is a crucial step. In line with pillar 2 of the Montevideo Strategy, these actions seek to permeate all institutional structures and make the feminist perspective a cross-cutting and priority objective in the development and implementation of feminist foreign and development cooperation policy.

C. Participation

Civil society's effective participation in the design and implementation of feminist policies is an essential element in ensuring their legitimacy and success. The implementation of open consultations that encourage greater transparency and participation, the inclusion of valuable knowledge and experiences from women and from experts and the promotion of inclusive dialogues with various sectors of civil society—with women's and feminist organizations in particular— not only enrich the process, but also consolidate the foundations of those policies. Incorporating the perspective of the global South and considering Latin American and Caribbean experiences in international cooperation for development is an additional challenge, given that the region is not entirely a priority in bilateral international cooperation; it does, however, offer the opportunity for innovations through triangular, South-South and circular cooperation with participatory processes involving an active civil society.

The construction by Latin America and the Caribbean of a Regional Gender Agenda has no counterpart in any other region of the world. It brings together feminist thought and action with governmental priorities in the formulation of gender equality policies. This link can be seen in the active participation of women's and feminist movements in the meetings of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in various national forums. This connection has enabled the mobilization of official agendas towards a feminist perspective on development and, at the same time, facilitated progress with a distinctive regional approach. That marks a significant difference compared to other regions of the world.

This participatory approach as part of the BMZ Feminist Development Policy (2023a) is in alignment with pillar 3, "participation", of the Montevideo Strategy, which underscores the importance of the active and diverse participation of women at all levels of decision-making, thus contributing to the construction of policies and actions that more effectively reflect the needs and aspirations of the region's women.

D. Capacity-building and strengthening

Building and strengthening capacities is a fundamental element in guaranteeing the effective implementation of a feminist foreign and development cooperation policy, in line with pillar 4 (capacity-building and -strengthening) of the Montevideo Strategy. The development of action plans, budgeting tools, implementation guidelines and other documents that define precise responsibilities and specific standards for each area involved is essential in maintaining consistency and efficiency in implementation.

The BMZ Feminist Development Policy (2023a) recognizes the importance of offering BMZ as an institutional example and the importance of ongoing staff training in key aspects of the policy. Training and continuing education could contribute to the development of a civil service that has a feminist perspective. Providing the necessary training, skill development processes and evaluations to all the staff of the ministries and agencies responsible for foreign and cooperation policy for feminist development is crucial so they can apply a feminist gender approach in a cross-cutting manner in their daily work.

Several countries, including Germany, have therefore paid keen attention to this issue, recognizing that international feminist policies must transform all departments of the affected ministries and agencies as well as their multilateral, bilateral and regional spheres of action. Given the wide range of issues addressed by feminist cooperation policies, the transfer of knowledge and experiences between countries—especially to adapt successful approaches to different contexts—is an invaluable resource. Exchanges of experiences and technical assistance, both nationally and internationally, have the potential to improve the capacity of the actors involved in policy development and implementation to achieve tangible results.

E. Financing

The allocation of specific resources for the advancement of gender equality is a key issue for the implementation and impact of feminist foreign and development cooperation policy; resources for the transformations required must therefore be mobilized and made available. German cooperation is committed to stepping up its bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation with partners in Latin America and the Caribbean through various cooperation mechanisms. With regard to budget issues, BMZ has undertaken to ensure that by 2025, fully 93% of the funds available for new projects will be allocated to those that promote gender equality. This target includes 85% of funds for projects where gender equality is a significant objective and 8% for projects where gender equality is the main objective (BMZ, 2023b). In comparison, the ministry reported that the corresponding figure in 2021 was close to 64%.

Given the limited fiscal space in Latin American and Caribbean countries, the use of innovative financing mechanisms can help to secure adequate and sustainable resources for long-term implementation. Strengthening and progressively increasing the volume of resources dedicated to North-South, South-South and triangular international cooperation is also crucial for implementing feminist foreign policies and programmes centred on women's rights and autonomy and adapted to local contexts (Güezmes and Romero, 2024). This constitutes a direct contribution to the commitments under pillar 5 (financing: mobilizing sufficient and sustainable resources for gender equality) of the Montevideo Strategy.

F. Portfolio and project management

The objectives of the BMZ Feminist Development Policy (2023a) include anchoring the feminist approach in projects and promoting gender equality in a targeted manner (action area 2). This requires structural changes, but also the adoption of an innovative approach to tools for facilitating the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all phases of the project cycle: diagnosis, formulation, implementation and evaluation. Similarly, it is imperative to increase the number of specific projects for gender equality and, at the same time, to mainstream the gender perspective throughout the project portfolio. An understanding of transformative gender actions in all interventions, with a multilevel approach from local to national, regional to global and multi-stakeholder, is increasingly important. The aim is to make progress with cooperation agreements on a wide range of issues, at different levels and with different instruments that incorporate the feminist perspective in a substantive way: not only technically but also politically, and addressed through specific projects and strategic issues (such as care, for example) and also in broader cross-cutting and multilateral initiatives.

The BMZ Feminist Development Policy also provides for strengthening transformative and intersectoral gender approaches and the participation of local actors and target groups throughout the life cycle of projects (BMZ, 2023a). Thus, the experiences and diversity of women's and feminist movements in Latin America and the Caribbean are key to directly contributing to project objectives, with a leading role in their implementation and monitoring. Different project phases benefit from the Regional Gender Agenda, which offers a framework of instruments and commitments on the various issues of importance in advancing the agenda of equality and women's autonomy in the region. It is therefore important to strengthen, both conceptually and strategically, the linkages between cooperation projects and the structural and transformative approach to the structural challenges of gender inequality in line with the Regional Gender Agenda, especially as regards the construction of care societies. Including gender equality as an overarching objective of any cooperation policy is of the utmost importance.

G. Partnerships for cooperation

A feminist development policy requires alliances to promote systematic and structural changes, and to manage possible scenarios of backsliding as regards women's rights and gender equality. One of the objectives of the BMZ Feminist Development Policy (2023a) is to further develop international partnerships (action area 3), in the recognition that international and multilateral cooperation supports and leverages more gender equity and equal rights and opportunities for all people. This also includes proceeding in conjunction with partners in order to learn from and emulate each other (BMZ, 2023a). Thus, pillar 8 of the Montevideo Strategy (cooperation: towards democratic multilateral governance) presents a series of measures to advance international cooperation and partnerships for Latin America and the Caribbean in order to support efforts to achieve gender equality and guarantee women's rights. Likewise, the Buenos Aires Commitment also calls for North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation in various areas. Triangular cooperation is another multilateral mechanism that contributes to strengthening feminist policy. Thus, "BMZ makes increasing use of triangular cooperation in order to build horizontal partnerships. In the context of triangular cooperation, the feminist development policy approach will be incorporated into a practical structure for shared learning and shared responsibility" (BMZ, 2023a, p. 33).

Pursuing this agenda requires stepping up and planning triangular cooperation and German non-State cooperation in order to interconnect specialists and experiences, fostering exchanges and learning acquired in overcoming certain development problems associated with the reproduction and maintenance of gender inequalities in the region. According to pillar 8 of the Montevideo Strategy: "feminist foreign and cooperation policies in Latin America and the Caribbean have the potential to catalyse cooperation strategies between countries with similar gender equality challenges and shared goals to secure women's human rights and autonomy" (Güezmes and Romero, 2024, p. 78). Forging alliances in the framework of feminist foreign policy offers an opportunity for mutual learning and for strengthening the way in which it is addressed at the global level. One example of this is the project "Strengthening Feminist Foreign Policy and Feminist International Cooperation through a community of practice between Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Germany and ECLAC", which arose from the partner countries' recognition of the need to address a common challenge: to develop a conceptual and operational framework for the institutional architecture of its feminist foreign policies, and to be able to guide and support other countries that decide to undertake this transformation of their foreign and international cooperation policies in Latin America and the Caribbean from the global South (see chapter VI for more details).

It is important for Latin America and the Caribbean to step up bilateral technical cooperation at local levels of action, through whichever cities, mayors' offices and municipalities that can share substantive experiences with respect to gender equality in their territories (BMZ, 2023b, p. 20), and to exchange best practices and inspiring experiences. It is also important to promote regional dialogue on gender equality among specialists in different areas in which several countries are making major investments through bilateral cooperation or in response to transnational phenomena.⁵ Such efforts should be broadened and deepened within the framework of the current agreements with multilateral regional organizations.⁶

⁵ The Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 identifies the following transnational problems: migration, trafficking in women and girls, smuggling of migrants, international organized crime, drug smuggling, forced displacement and the situation of refugees, global value chains and global care chains, financial volatility, wealth concentration, climate change, portability of pensions and the rights of Afro-descendent women and women of different indigenous and ethnic groups (measure 8a).

⁶ The regional partner organizations of German cooperation are ECLAC, which plays a leading role in feminist development policy, together with the Central American Integration System, the Caribbean Community, the Organization of American States, the inter-American human rights system and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization.

H. Information systems

Mainstreaming the gender and intersectional perspective in the production of statistics is essential to generate data that accurately capture the persistence and magnitude of societal inequalities. As stated in pillar 9 of the Montevideo Strategy, “information systems”, it is also crucial for “transforming data into information, information into knowledge and knowledge into political decisions” (ECLAC, 2017, p. 32). Official statistics are therefore vitally indispensable as a source of information for the design and implementation of policies and programmes that help achieve gender equality and women’s autonomy (ECLAC, 2024e).

According to its Feminist Development Policy, BMZ (2023a) aims to improve its empirical base and use it systematically for the design and implementation of related policies. Similarly, the actions set out in its Third Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality (2023–27) (BMZ, 2023c) seek to strengthen the collection and use of gender data that disaggregate the reality of the lives of women and marginalized groups according to various criteria, such as intersectionality and gender-specific issues.

The Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has made progress with several initiatives for the development of instruments such as the *Guidelines for mainstreaming the gender perspective in statistical production* (ECLAC, 2024e), which was developed under the Buenos Aires Commitment. These Guidelines, which provide assistance for incorporating the gender perspective into the eight phases of the statistical process, are aimed primarily at the agencies of national statistical systems. Thus, the forging of strategic alliances in the region to strengthen statistical systems with a gender perspective is an important issue, one that entails providing the necessary resources and technical capacity and promoting increased exchanges of experiences, in light of the varying levels of institutional capacities found in the region’s countries.

I. Monitoring, evaluation and accountability

Like any other public policy, a feminist development cooperation policy requires a robust monitoring and evaluation system that allows for accountability regarding its impact and results. The Feminist Development Policy (BMZ, 2023a) covers the development of evaluation mechanisms and tools to measure the impact of policy implementation in the medium and long term, including participatory mechanisms with civil society and partnerships with specialized institutions. Monitoring the impact of policy measures is interconnected with the Third Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality (2023–27) (BMZ, 2023c).

The “monitoring, evaluation and accountability: guaranteeing rights and transparency” pillar of the Montevideo Strategy considers it part of the cycle of planning and implementing gender equality and women’s rights policies, and says it enables obstacles and progress in the fulfilment of the commitments assumed by the States to be analysed. At the same time, it calls for coordination among the different accountability instruments.

Considering the challenges in assessing the real impact and transformative changes of feminist foreign and development cooperation policies, joining efforts and developing partnerships between BMZ and ECLAC—as well as with the region’s countries—is essential for the development of innovative monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess both the real impact and also areas for improvement in the implementation of existing policies and instruments with feminist monitoring and evaluation methods. Since BMZ plans to evaluate in 2025 the implementation of its policy and the successes it has achieved (BMZ, 2023a), a particular focus on assessing the policy’s implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean based on the Regional Gender Agenda is recommended, which would broaden the scope of the study and help to identify areas for further collaboration.

In the short term, a simple and updated follow-up system should be developed in the region to monitor progress in gender mainstreaming in cooperation projects, as regards both the achievement of results and goals and the volume of gender-related investments in Latin America and the Caribbean.

V. Bridges to the future: triangular cooperation, partnerships and communities of practice

Latin America and the Caribbean has taken significant steps to promote constitutional, legislative, political and cultural transformations that have modified discriminatory institutional structures. In particular, the region has consolidated formal equality by establishing the principle of equality and non-discrimination in its constitutional and regulatory frameworks. Substantive equality in practice, however, remains an aspiration in the region. Of course, the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean have taken significant steps forward with the aspirations of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the commitments of the Regional Gender Agenda in synergy with the 2030 Agenda and in compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention of Belém do Pará.

In the Buenos Aires Commitment (2022), the ECLAC member States recognized the existence of multiple and interrelated international energy, food and financial crises, the increasing challenges posed by global climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification and high levels of public debt. This challenging scenario is compounded by ever-accelerating technological changes, the care crisis and the pressure on social protection systems in a context marked by low economic growth and limited fiscal and monetary policy space. These cascading crises threaten the achievements made in reducing poverty and inequality, promoting gender equality, ensuring the rights and autonomy of women, adolescents and girls in all their diversity, and pursuing sustainable development in the region's countries.

In recent years, progress with results has been slow and uneven between countries and between the different dimensions of women's autonomy and diversity. As women advance into new areas, new forms of resistance, discrimination and violence also emerge: for example, employment precarity, political violence or forms of violence produced or amplified by the use of technology or targeting women human rights defenders. The structural challenges of gender inequality identified in the Montevideo Strategy continue to act as major barriers to the full exercise of the rights of women and girls and to limit the scope of public policies. Lastly, the growth of conservative groups and their global and regional alliances, which have made misogyny and the denial of international agreements on gender equality one of their goals, pose a major threat for the coming decade.

The combination of persistent inequality and poverty, discriminatory cultural patterns, the concentration of power and the unfair organization of care can be seen through the gender gaps in different social and economic indicators. The region has made progress towards parity in education: in fact, women on average have more years of schooling, but this is not yet reflected in their full participation in the economy, politics, science and technology, or many other fields. Women are overrepresented in poor households, frequently lack their own incomes, face violence in all its forms and must deal with a scarcity of opportunities. The development model that has predominated in the region is closely related to the fact that Latin America and the Caribbean is the world's most unequal region. At the current rate of progress, it is unlikely that the structural challenges will be overcome and substantive gender equality achieved by 2030. The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean is a very important tool for monitoring strategic indicators.

Given the structural nature of inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean, progress towards gender equality and women's rights requires overcoming the region's development crisis. That crisis is characterized by three mutually reinforcing traps: low growth, high inequality and low social mobility, and low institutional capacity (ECLAC, 2024g).

ECLAC has proposed moving towards a care society as a new paradigm for a future in which life and the planet are sustainable and that recognizes the interdependence in synergy between people, the environment and economic and social development (ECLAC, 2022b). This proposal was discussed by the governments at the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and has been transformed into a regional intergovernmental agreement through the Buenos Aires Commitment that incorporates the Regional Gender Agenda. That commitment reaffirms the importance of considering care as a necessity, a job, a right and a sector that helps to boost the economy as a whole. Accordingly, the topic to be discussed at the sixteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Mexico in August 2025, is "political, economic, social, cultural and environmental transformations as a means of advancing the care society and gender equality". Mention should be made of the importance within the region of other intergovernmental forums within the ECLAC framework that contribute to the debates on the care society and have made progress by reaching important agreements on its definition.

Advancing towards the institutionalization of feminist foreign policies and guaranteeing their continuity demands the commitment of government authorities and the implementation of concrete actions to accelerate the path towards substantive equality. Notable in this regard is the Declaration on Feminist Foreign Policy for Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted at the VIII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, 2024a) promoted by Mexico, Chile and Colombia, and adhered to by Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and the Plurinational State of Bolivia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, 2024a).

One significant step forward in the region is the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean ("Escazú Agreement"), which came into force on 22 April 2021. It was the first regional environmental agreement in Latin America and the Caribbean. Recently, at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement, at the instigation of Mexico, the countries adopted a decision on gender mainstreaming that establishes the urgency of incorporating and strengthening the gender perspective and the full and effective participation of women in all their diversity, including Indigenous women, and of preventing discrimination and gender-based violence against women human rights defenders in the environmental sphere. This decision was a significant milestone for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2024a). The decision also includes the development of a guide for gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the Escazú Agreement, to be presented at the next regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2026 (ECLAC, 2024a).

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have recognized the need for greater speed in achieving gender equality through a renewed international cooperation agreement that provides for innovative mechanisms and strengthened synergies and partnerships with the broadest spectrum of actors, in which no one is left behind and in which all people and all countries participate in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2030 in synergy with the Regional Gender Agenda. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean recognize that South-South and triangular cooperation are essential to meet the challenges of sustainable development, leaving no one behind (ECLAC, 2023d). As has been noted throughout this document, the international context demands adopting urgent action and raising the ambition and scale of joint and collaborative efforts at the regional and international levels.

The region has called for North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation in a number of areas and through the agreements adopted by the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Likewise, resolution 1(I) of the first session of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, 30 and 31 May 2023) called upon the subsidiary bodies of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, including the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to strengthen synergies in areas relating to bilateral, multilateral, South-South, triangular and humanitarian cooperation, sustainable development and gender equality, particularly with regard to the identification of common criteria to guide evaluation of these cooperation modalities and their impacts, including in the area of humanitarian cooperation. Similarly, at the first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean (2024), organized by ECLAC, the Commission was asked to prepare a plan of action for mainstreaming a gender perspective in international development cooperation policies and programmes, as a methodological and conceptual tool to guide the appropriate incorporation and implementation of the gender perspective in the various modalities of cooperation between member States, and to present this document at the second session of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁷ This document will help to guide cooperation agencies and entities on the conceptual and regulatory frameworks, instruments, and information, monitoring and evaluation systems applicable to different forms of cooperation initiatives, programmes and projects throughout their entire cycle.

The region recognizes the vital importance of including women's and feminist organizations and extending determined support to them. One pioneering initiative that arose from the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean is the Regional Fund in Support of Women's and Feminist Organizations and Movements (ECLAC/UN-Women, 2022). This fund has a board of directors made up of representatives of governments, women's and feminist organizations, networks and movements, and ECLAC, together with a secretariat made up of representatives of governments and women's and feminist organizations and the UN-Women Regional Office as the administering entity.

The implementation of feminist foreign and cooperation policies with a gender perspective is thus a driving force for the Regional Gender Agenda and for the different manifestations of feminisms to achieve a more productive, inclusive and sustainable future with substantive equality.

⁷ Paragraph 3 of the agreements of the first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

VI. The project “Strengthening Feminist Foreign Policy and Feminist International Cooperation through a community of practice between Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Germany and ECLAC”

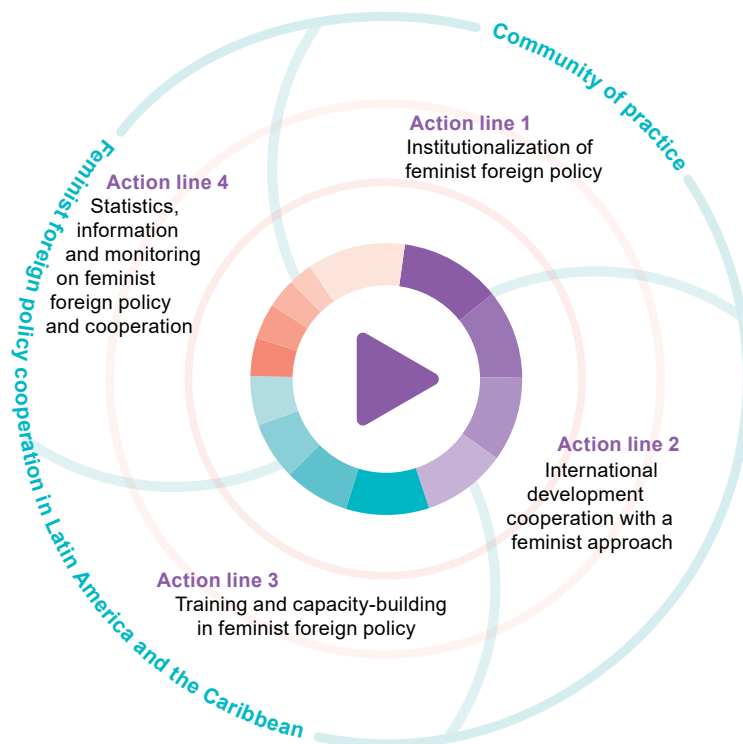
A promising regional and multi-stakeholder practice is the one developed by Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Germany and ECLAC, who in 2023 jointly embarked on the design of a triangular cooperation project that was submitted to the BMZ/GIZ Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean under its twenty-fifth call for proposals. The results of the project will contribute to the entire region, specifically to two meetings scheduled to take place in 2025: the second session of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Chile (17 and 18 June 2025), and the sixteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to take place in Mexico. The project has also already contributed to the meeting held in Mexico in July 2024 within the framework of the Third Ministerial Conference on Feminist Foreign Policies.

The project “Strengthening Feminist Foreign Policy and Feminist International Cooperation through a community of practice between Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Germany and ECLAC” arose from the partner countries’ recognition of a common challenge and the need to tackle it: developing a conceptual and operational framework for the institutionalization of their feminist foreign policies. It also seeks to guide and support other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean that decide to undertake similar transformations of their foreign and international cooperation policies, from the perspective and with the voice of the global South. By establishing a community of practice, Chile, Colombia and Mexico—the three countries in the region that currently have feminist foreign policies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2023; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, 2024b; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, 2020)—joined forces with Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and ECLAC in this project. This is the first cooperation initiative on gender equality and feminist cooperation of the BMZ/GIZ Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean and the first in which ECLAC participates.

The transformation proposed by the project “Strengthening Feminist Foreign Policy and Feminist International Cooperation through a community of practice between Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Germany and ECLAC” involves changes in foreign ministries and international cooperation agencies, in international negotiations and in foreign policy decision-making. Thus, the project has raised the regional ambition to advance the Regional Gender Agenda through a collective learning approach.

In order to achieve that goal, the project is structured around four key areas of work (see diagram 3). The first action line aims at strengthening and institutionalizing feminist foreign policy in the foreign ministries of Chile, Colombia and Mexico (as regards the political, regulatory and operational frameworks), under the leadership of Chile. In this way, the project’s goal is to ensure that the feminist foreign policies are sustainable policies. The second line of action involves strengthening international cooperation for development with a feminist approach within foreign ministries and international cooperation agencies (as appropriate), and identifying guidelines, directives, practices and methodologies in a community of practice hosted by ECLAC. In addition, in order to contribute to the effective development of this policy in the public sector, enabling it to permeate the different levels of the partner countries’ foreign ministries and cooperation agencies, it involves a third line of action, led by Colombia: strengthening training and capacity-building for ownership, when appropriate, of feminist foreign policy by officials of foreign affairs ministries and international development cooperation agencies. Lastly, a fourth action line, led by Mexico, focuses on the production of information and data collection on the partner countries’ progress with strengthening their feminist foreign policies and feminist international development cooperation policies; it also addresses the collection of statistics on persistent gaps and progress in the proportion of women in diplomatic careers, in international negotiations and in the leadership of key issues in international development cooperation in the partner countries. This line of action will contribute to the collection of data on women’s participation in diplomacy and international negotiations, which in turn will allow the monitoring and evaluation of progress in these areas, as well as accountability to civil society.

Diagram 3
Action lines of the project “Strengthening Feminist Foreign Policy and Feminist International Cooperation through a community of practice between Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Germany and ECLAC”



The partner countries have also played an active role in various regional forums in keeping with the objectives of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development's Feminist Development Policy (BMZ, 2023a), the approach of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, the foreign policies of Chile, Colombia and Mexico, and their alignment with the Regional Gender Agenda. At those multilateral spaces, they have contributed by promoting dialogue and exchanges of experiences, giving life to the project's proposed community of practice. The countries have also promoted a series of concrete actions and proposals at those forums.

The first two milestones in this period include the launch of the action plan on feminist foreign policy for 2024–2025 in Chile (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, 2024a) as part of the commemoration of International Women's Day, and the presentation of the Feminist Foreign Policy of Colombia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, 2024b) at the sixty-eight session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

May 2024 saw the official launch of the project "Strengthening Feminist Foreign Policy and Feminist International Cooperation through a community of practice between Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Germany and ECLAC" (ECLAC, 2024b) at the VIII Regional Conference on Trilateral Cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean held in Salvador, Brazil (GIZ, 2024b). This event allowed for exchanges of good practices and lessons learned in triangular cooperation projects in areas such as climate action, gender equality and social inclusion. It also marked the formal beginning of the creation of a community of practice.

Partnership-building efforts were also seen in the partner countries' participation at the Third Ministerial Conference on Feminist Foreign Policies (Government of Mexico, 2024) held in Mexico City in early July 2024. Led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico and jointly organized by the National Women's Institute of Mexico (INMUJERES) and UN-Women, the Conference brought together more than 40 States, 13 international organizations and more than 100 civil society organizations, and was the first conference on feminist foreign policy in the global South. The resulting ministerial declaration (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, 2024a), supported by 20 countries, emphasized support for and commitment to feminist foreign policies and international cooperation for development with a gender perspective (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, 2024b). The partner countries and ECLAC contributed to the panel session "Feminist foreign policies and development cooperation with a gender perspective from Latin America and the Caribbean: the care society for a better world".

Lastly, another important milestone was the first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in June 2024. That meeting evaluated South-South and triangular cooperation in the region and reviewed the opportunities for international cooperation with a multi-stakeholder approach, in preparation for the Summit of the Future.⁸ In that context, a report was given on the project "Strengthening Feminist Foreign Policy and Feminist International Cooperation through a community of practice between Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Germany and ECLAC", and reference was made to the progress made in gender mainstreaming in statistical production under the aegis of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and to the decision to mainstream gender in the Escazú Agreement. In line with that progress and the dialogue held during the meeting, the delegates adopted an agreement containing six points (ECLAC, 2024f). As one of those points, ECLAC was asked to prepare "a plan of action for mainstreaming a gender perspective in international development cooperation policies and programmes, as a methodological and conceptual tool to guide the appropriate incorporation and implementation of the gender perspective in the various modalities of cooperation between member States, and to present this document at the second session of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean" (ECLAC, 2024f, p. 1). Following this meeting, the Office of the Executive Secretary of ECLAC asked the member States for inputs and to respond to a questionnaire to assess the current status of tools and promising practices in each country.

⁸ The Summit of the Future is a high-level event, bringing world leaders together to forge a new international consensus to deliver a better present and safeguard the future. Effective global cooperation is increasingly necessary for our survival, but it is difficult to achieve in an environment of mistrust with outdated structures that no longer reflect today's political and economic realities. The Summit offers an exceptional opportunity to restore eroded confidence and to demonstrate that international cooperation can effectively achieve its set objectives and address new threats and opportunities as they arise.

Looking ahead to future challenges, the project also aims to contribute to two key events scheduled for 2025. First, the second session of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean to be held at ECLAC and, second, the sixteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean to be held in Mexico. Both events represent crucial opportunities for continuing the implementation of feminist foreign policies and the strengthening of feminist international cooperation, consolidating the progress achieved to date and deepening the partner countries' commitment to gender equality in the region.

The contribution of the project "Strengthening Feminist Foreign Policy and Feminist International Cooperation through a community of practice between Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Germany and ECLAC" lies not only in its achievements to date, but also in its ability to maintain a sustained impact over time. The institutionalization of the gender perspective in foreign and international cooperation policies offers a replicable model for other countries and regions seeking to advance substantive equality. The ongoing monitoring and evaluation of results will enable not only the adjustment and improvement of policy implementation strategies, but also the strengthening of accountability and the long-term consolidation of progress. This process will contribute to a structural transformation of feminist foreign policies, positioning Latin America and the Caribbean as a global reference point in the sphere of feminist international cooperation.

Looking forward, the project will continue to strengthen partnerships, foster dialogue and facilitate the creation of public policies that ensure women's effective representation in diplomatic processes and international decision-making. In a constantly changing global context, this initiative provides an example of innovation and shared leadership for sustainable development and gender equality in the field of foreign policy and international cooperation.

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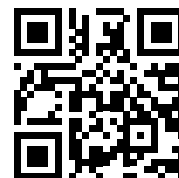
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Latin America and the Caribbean is committed to mainstreaming a gender perspective in foreign policy to promote human rights, international peace and security, climate action, international cooperation and sustainable development. The adoption of a feminist foreign policy offers an opportunity to renew multilateralism and make this commitment a reality. This document sets out criteria for fostering synergies between Germany's feminist development cooperation policy and the Regional Gender Agenda agreed since 1977 at the meetings of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also seeks to contribute to increasing funding and international cooperation, in its various forms, with gender equality as the main objective across the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.



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