Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5 GENDER EQUALITY

Regional overview

- Latin America and the Caribbean has the distinction of having the only Regional Gender Agenda in the world, which derives from the agreements reached by member States of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) at the sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean since 1977 and offers a broad, comprehensive road map.[1]
- The Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development is one of the world's most advanced instruments for ensuring sexual and reproductive rights within a sustainable development framework, in addition to being a regional agreement with ties to the Regional Gender Agenda.
- Progress has been made on the legislative front to protect women's rights, including laws to achieve gender parity in politics and combat gender-based violence. However, structural challenges remain, including the persistence of feminicide, the sexual division of labour, the unequal social organization of care and gaps in access to economic and technological resources.
- Compared to men, women work as many or more total hours per week but fewer paid hours. The larger proportion of working hours that women spend on unpaid domestic and care work undermines their ability to earn their own income and exercise their autonomy.
- The region has also made progress in expanding maternity and paternity leave, although there is still a need to ratify and implement international labour standards regarding care,[2] including to extend the duration of paternity leave and institute parental and long-term care leave.
- Despite States' commitments and the range of legislative advances made, child and early marriage remains a systemic and persistent practice in the region. Although female genital mutilation cases have not been systematically documented, the practice has been reported in some communities of Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru.

1 This subsidiary body establishes public policy commitments and guidelines to achieve normative and substantive gender equality and ensure the rights and the autonomy of women.

2 The Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) of the International Labour Organization are fundamental in that regard.

Key facts on the region

- Thirty-six countries and territories of Latin America and the Caribbean have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. All the countries and territories of the region have laws to prevent and eradicate violence against women —some limited to the domestic sphere—, and 14 countries have passed comprehensive legislation to address all forms of violence in various spheres.
- Regulatory frameworks have been adopted to combat gender-based violence, including to address femicide or feminicide in 19 countries and territories and to ban child marriage without exception in 14 countries.
- The proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age, is 7% in the region overall, and 8.3% among women aged 15–49. That said, between 63% and 76% of women have experienced some form of gender-based violence in some sphere.
- In 2023, at least 3,897 women were victims of femicide or feminicide; in other words, every day, at least 11 women and girls are killed on the basis of gender.
- Data for 2023 indicate that, on average, 4% of women aged 20–24 in 26 countries and territories of the region had entered marriage or another form of union by age 15, and 21.2% by age 18. This has a clear impact on school dropout and expulsion.
- Eighteen countries had constitutional or legislative mandates to support greater participation of women at the national or local level, and nine had passed gender parity laws.

- At the regional level, countries with gender parity measures that include robust enforcement mechanisms had average female participation rates of 45% in 2023 —13 percentage points higher than the 32% average among countries with no such measures.
- Women's participation in national parliaments averaged 35.8% in 2024 and women held 27.2% of seats in deliberative bodies of local government in 2023. The proportion of women in managerial positions was just 36.3% in 2022.
- Eight countries have passed laws establishing national care policies or systems.
- All the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean recognize the right to maternity leave, of 14–17 weeks in 10 of the countries and 18 weeks or more in only 5. In the remaining 18 countries, the duration of maternity leave is less than 14 weeks.
- Twenty-three Latin American countries have conducted at least one time-use measurement exercise, and five of them have established satellite accounts for unpaid domestic and care work based on official statistics. The results indicate that the percentage of unpaid domestic and care work is between one fourth and one fifth of gross domestic product and that women account for three fourths of that percentage.
- Of 21 Latin American and Caribbean countries with data available for 2022, 75% had laws and regulations guaranteeing access to sexual and reproductive health. For the Caribbean subregion, that figure was 54%.
- Eight countries have banned abortion in all circumstances: the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Suriname. Six countries, meanwhile, guarantee the right to abortion with no restrictions as to circumstance: Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, Guyana, Mexico and Uruguay. The remaining countries allow abortion only in certain circumstances.

- In the seven countries of the region with data on contraceptive decisions for the period 2006–2018, 91% of women aged 15–49 report making their own informed decisions about the use of contraception. The figure was 86% for reproductive healthcare decisions and 90% for decisions regarding sexual relations.
- In the 19 countries and territories of the region with data available, the proportion of women who owned a mobile phone in 2023 was 83.8%, with no significant gender gap (83.7% for men). This indicator is showing progress —more so than the global indicator—, but the pace is still too slow to meet the target.
- Among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, 13% have systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment. In 2021, Ecuador and the Plurinational State of Bolivia had the most comprehensive systems, while those in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama and Paraguay fulfilled fewer criteria.

OF 21 LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES WITH DATA AVAILABLE FOR 2022, 75% HAD LAWS AND REGULATIONS GUARANTEEING ACCESS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH. FOR THE CARIBBEAN SUBREGION, THAT FIGURE WAS 54%.

Sustainable Development Goal 5 and Human Rights

The human rights focus of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development stems from an explicit grounding in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties, in addition to other instruments, such as the Declaration on the Right to Development (art. 10).

The SDGs are universal in scope, seeking to "realize the human rights of all" in developed and developing countries alike (2030 Agenda). The recognition of the need to fight poverty and inequalities in the 2030 Agenda is evident in its focus on reaching the furthest behind first and ensuring that no one is left behind —a principle which underpins the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Although the SDGs are not specifically framed in human rights terms, many of their targets align with international standards. Goal 5 (Gender equality) is directly linked to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and also has links to other human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

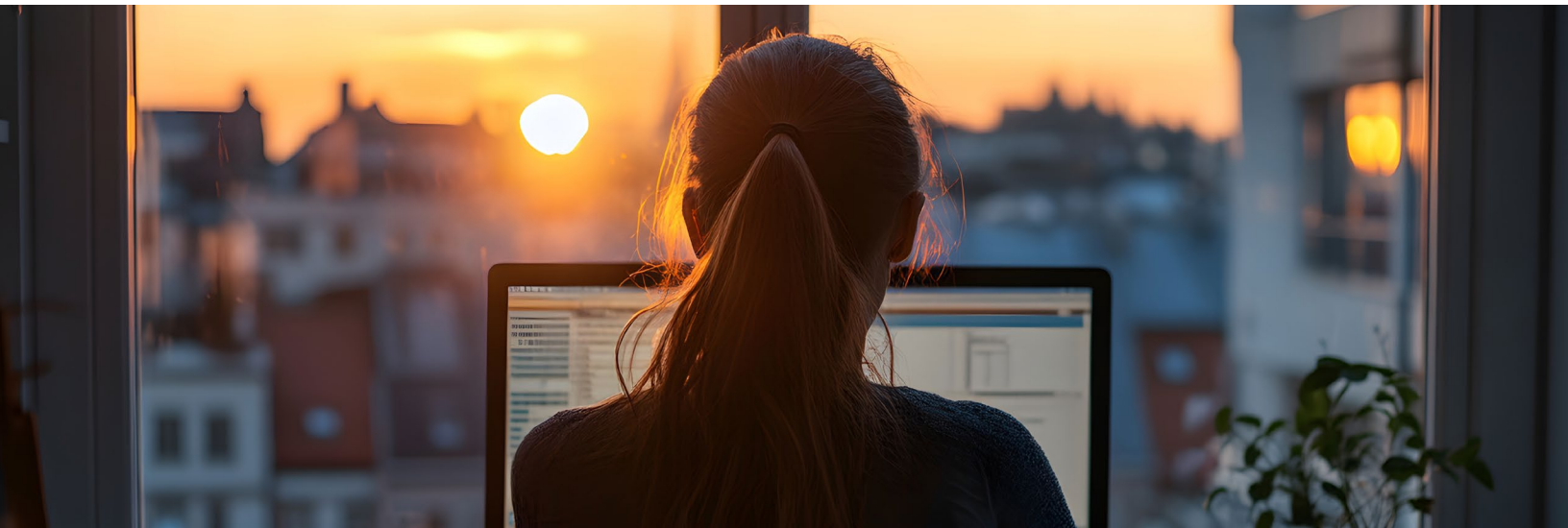
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls Goal 5 targets include ending violence against women and girls; valuing unpaid care and domestic work; ensuring women's full participation and universal access to sexual and reproductive health; and giving women equal rights to economic resources.	**Elimination of discrimination against women and girls**: Convention on the Rights of the Child (art. 2); and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (arts. 1–5), in particular in legislation, political and public life (art. 7), economic and social life (arts. 11 and 13) and family relations (art. 16). **Right to decide on number and spacing of children**: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (arts. 12 and 16.1 (e)); and Convention on the Rights of the Child (art. 24.2 (f)). **Special protection for mothers and children**: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 10). **Elimination of violence against women and girls**: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (arts. 1–6); Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (arts. 1–4); and Convention on the Rights of the Child (arts. 24.2 and 35). **Right to just and favourable working conditions**: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 7); and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (art. 11).

The mechanisms that comprise the universal human rights protection system, namely the universal periodic review, human rights treaty bodies and special procedures, make recommendations to each Member State (see Universal Human Rights Index [online] https://uhri.ohchr.org/en).

Source: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Good practices in the region

- The ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean publishes a set of relevant indicators for monitoring progress on gender equality and on the economic and physical autonomy and decision-making of women and girls in all their diversity.
- Countries have made progress in developing strategies to implement existing legislation on gender-based violence at the different levels of government. Examples include the coordinating mechanism for a comprehensive approach to sex- and gender-based violence against women, children and adolescents, which Colombia passed in 2020; the National Coordinating Committee of the Immediate Search Mechanism for Missing Women in Guatemala; and Act No. 21675, which Chile passed in 2024.
- The care society proposed by ECLAC is a model that member States endorsed at the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is centred on the sustainability of life and recognizes the interdependence among people, the environment, and economic and social development, taking into account self-care and care for others, including caregivers, and care for the planet.
- Caribbean countries have implemented disaster measures with a gender perspective.
- Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Nicaragua have implemented measures to monitor and combat sexual exploitation and harassment online.



- Colombia's national time-use survey is institutionalized by law and conducted every three years, and Mexico's, which is conducted every five years, has been officially declared a matter of national interest.
- Some countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Mexico) have made notable efforts on gender indicator mapping and georeferencing and on issues of care supply and demand, with a view to strengthening the design of public care policies.
- In 2019, Mexico's Parity Everywhere constitutional reform established the principle of parity as a duty of the State at all levels and in all branches. In Honduras and Peru, pro-parity legislative changes raised the target for women's participation in candidate lists from 30% to 50%, which led to significant increases in the number of women elected to legislative office at the local level.
- In recent years, several countries in the region have implemented and strengthened policies to guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health services, in particular programmes for adolescents in Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. In addition, measures have been adopted in Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Panama and the Plurinational State of Bolivia to incorporate sexuality education in general administrative regulations concerning education and curricula.
- The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and the Plurinational State of Bolivia have incorporated the gender perspective in matters of land access through regulatory and institutional changes.

ECLAC recommendations

- Progress is needed on implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda, in synergy with the 2030 Agenda and based on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to overcome structural obstacles to gender equality.
- Progress on the Buenos Aires Commitment[3] with regard to the autonomy of women, adolescents and girls must be achieved by strengthening capacities, technology, humanitarian assistance and investment in essential infrastructure and services to ensure universal access to comprehensive health.
- The regulatory framework for gender equality in the workplace must be strengthened, including by explicitly prohibiting gender-based discrimination in employment and guaranteeing equal pay for equal work. There is a need to ratify and implement Convention No. 183 and Convention No. 156 and to bring maternity, paternity and parental leave up to international standards.
- Patriarchal cultural patterns should be transformed by cultivating co-responsible and non-violent conceptions of masculinity and by implementing laws, policies and comprehensive and multisectoral action plans, as well as awareness-raising programmes to prevent, address, punish and eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women, adolescents and girls in all their diversity, in different areas and manifestations.
- There is a need to strengthen statistical information systems on violence, integrating gender, intersectional and intercultural perspectives.
- It is important to take into account the effects of climate change, environmental disasters and emergencies, which exacerbate gender-based violence against women and girls.

Foster co-responsible masculinities

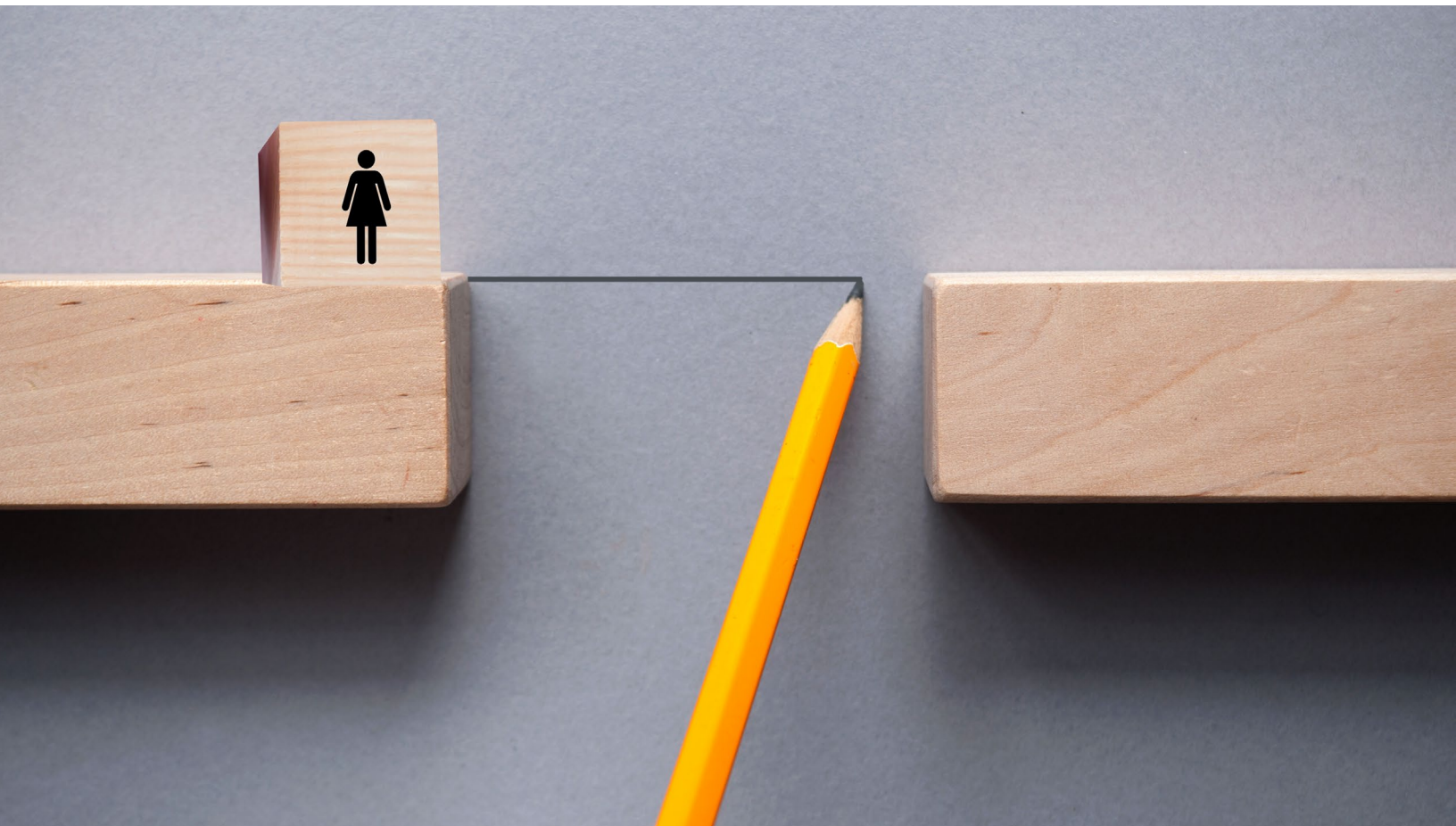
Comprehensive plans and educational programmes

Access to economic resources

Recognize, measure and value care work

[3] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Buenos Aires Commitment* (LC/CRM.15/6/Rev.1), Santiago, 2023.

- Implementing legislation to categorically ban child marriage, breaking the statistical and social silence on this problem and strengthening public policies and services are key to the full personal development of girls and adolescents.
- Ensuring women's access to economic resources, such as property and control over land, as well as other resources, requires gender equality and the promotion of women's rights and autonomy.
- In addition to recognizing, measuring and valuing unpaid care work, public policies must be implemented to reduce and redistribute the burden of care, in line with a cross-sectoral approach that upholds the principles of universality, intersectionality and shared responsibility between men and women and among households, the State, the market and communities.



Key regional statistics

Sustainable Development Goal 5

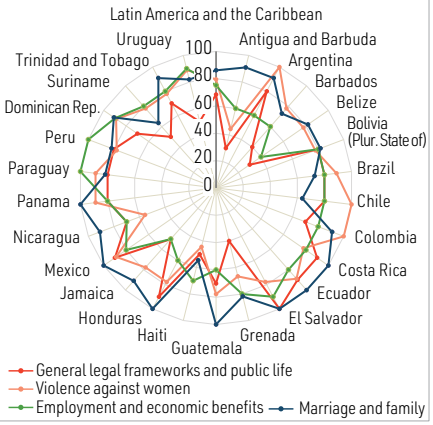
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Progress in Latin America and the Caribbean

Target 5.1 Eliminate discrimination against women and girls

5.1

Indicator 5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex, 2022
(Percentages)



Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls

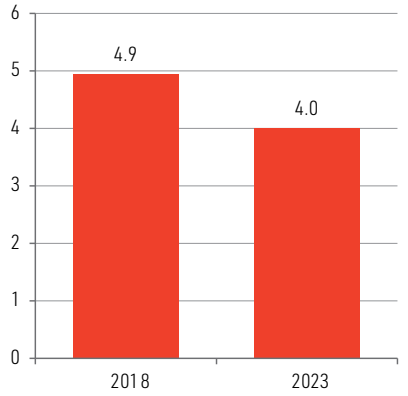
5.2

Indicator C.5-2 Rate of femicide or feminicide per 100,000 women, latest year available
(Rates per 100,000 women)

Target 5.3 Eliminate child marriage and female genital mutilation

5.3

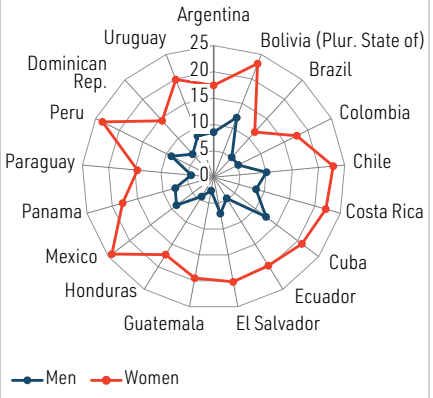
Indicator 5.3.1 Latin America and the Caribbean: proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a stable union before age 18, 2018 and 2023
(Percentages)



Target 5.4 Value domestic and care work and promote shared responsibility

5.4

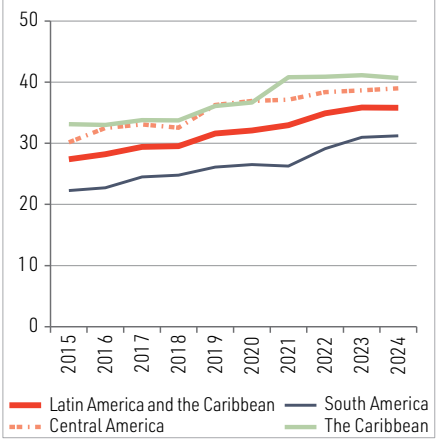
Indicator 5.4.1 Time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, latest year available
(Percentages)



Target 5.5 Ensure women's participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels

5.5

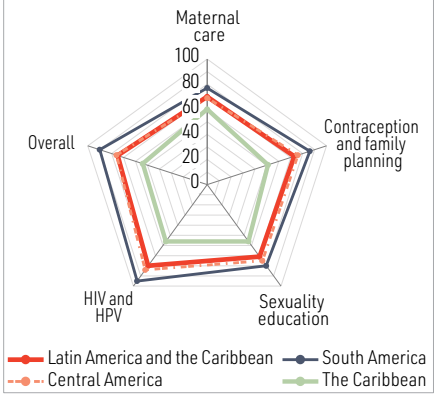
Indicator 5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments, 2015–2024
(Percentages)



Target 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health

5.6

Indicator 5.6.2 Countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, information and education, 2022
(Percentages)



5.1	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.b	5.c	5.4	5.6	5.a

- The trend is moving away from the target
- The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met
- Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend
- Insufficient data

Fuente: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Note: Each indicator comprises one or more statistical series, which partially or fully cover the corresponding indicator. In the figures presented here, one or more statistical series were used for the respective indicator.

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GENDER
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