FULL SAIL TOWARDS A REGION 50-50

The advancement of women in Latin America and the Caribbean 2016-2018
UN WOMEN
Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean

FULL SAIL TOWARDS
A REGION 50-50
The advancement of women
in Latin America and the Caribbean 2016-2018
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<td>ACOBOL</td>
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<td>AECID</td>
<td>Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation</td>
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<td>AFM</td>
<td>Marcosur Feminist Articulation</td>
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<td>AIAMP</td>
<td>Ibero-American Association of Public Ministries</td>
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<td>AICS</td>
<td>Italian Agency for Development Cooperation</td>
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<td>ATIC</td>
<td>Technical Criminal Investigation Agency</td>
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<td>AUCI</td>
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<td>BANDESAL</td>
<td>Development Bank of El Salvador</td>
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<td>BDHH</td>
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<td>CAAAMI</td>
<td>Andean Advisory Council of High-Level Authorities on Women and Equal Opportunities</td>
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<td>CAN</td>
<td>Andean Community of Nations</td>
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<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community</td>
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<td>CDE</td>
<td>Documentation and Studies Centre</td>
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<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<td>Centre for Distributive, Labour and Social Studies of the National University of La Plata, Argentina</td>
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<td>CEGS</td>
<td>Centre of Excellence in Gender Statistics</td>
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<td>CEJIL</td>
<td>Centre for Justice and International Law</td>
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<td>CEPIA</td>
<td>Audio-visual Production and Research Centre of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the UBA, Argentina</td>
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<td>CESOP</td>
<td>Centre for Social Studies and Public Opinion of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Central University of Chile</td>
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<td>CHIRAPAQ</td>
<td>Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru</td>
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<td>CICA</td>
<td>Indigenous Council of Central America</td>
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<td>CIEDUR</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Centre for Development Studies Uruguay</td>
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<td>CIM</td>
<td>Inter-American Commission of Women of the OAS</td>
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<td>CIMUDIS</td>
<td>Circle of Women with Disabilities</td>
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<td>CINAMU</td>
<td>National Institute for Women Centres</td>
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<td>COMMCA</td>
<td>Council of Women’s Affairs Ministers of Central America and the Dominican Republic</td>
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<td>CONADI</td>
<td>National Corporation for Indigenous Development</td>
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<td>CONPES 161</td>
<td>National Public Policy on Gender Equity</td>
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<td>COSEFIN</td>
<td>Council of Ministers of Finance of Central America</td>
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<td>CSAG</td>
<td>Civil Society Advisory Group (UN Women)</td>
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CSIVI  Commission for Monitoring, Promoting and Verifying the Implementation of the Final Agreement
CSW   Commission on the Status of Women
DNP   National Planning Directorate
ECLAC Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECMIA Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas
ELA   Latin American Justice and Gender Team
EPIC  Equal Pay International Commission
FILAC Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean
FLACSO Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences
GPM   Women's Parliamentary Group
ICW Latina Regional Community of Women with HIV AIDS
IDEA  Institute for Business Development of Argentina
ICESCR International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IIDH  Inter-American Institute of Human Rights
ILO   International Labour Organization
ILSB  Simone de Beauvoir Leadership Institute
IM-Defensoras Mesoamerican Women Human Rights Defenders Initiative
INAMU National Institute for Women
INEC  National Institute of Statistics and Censuses
INEGI National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico
INMUJERES National Institute for Women of Mexico
IOM   International Organization for Migration
IPEA  Institute of Applied Economic Research
IPS   Inter Press Service
ISDEMU Salvador Institute for the Advancement of Women
JASS  Just Associates
MAM   National mechanisms for the advancement of women
MERCOSUR Southern Common Market
MESECVI Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention
MIDEPLAN Ministry of Development and Planning
MIMPAZ Inter-Institutional Table on Women, Peace and Security
MINUJUSTH Mission for Justice Support in Haiti
MINUSTAH United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
NIMD  Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
NRC   Norwegian Refugee Council
OAS   Organization of American States
OECD  Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECS  Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OHCHR United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDG   Sustainable Development Goals
<table>
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Description</th>
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<td>PAHO</td>
<td>Pan American Health Organization</td>
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<td>Parlatino</td>
<td>Latin American and Caribbean Parliament</td>
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<td>PDES</td>
<td>Economic and Social Development Plan of Bolivia</td>
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<td>PIEG</td>
<td>Policy for Gender Equality and Equity</td>
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<td>PLANEG</td>
<td>National Plan for Gender Equality</td>
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<td>RECMURIC</td>
<td>Central American Network of Rural, Indigenous and Peasant Women</td>
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<td>RIMISP</td>
<td>Latin American Centre for Rural Development</td>
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<td>RMAAD</td>
<td>Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women</td>
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<td>RMAAM</td>
<td>Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities for Women</td>
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<td>RMRP</td>
<td>Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan</td>
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<td>SEGIB</td>
<td>Ibero-American General Secretariat</td>
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<td>SENPLADES</td>
<td>National Secretariat for Planning and Development</td>
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<td>SEPREM</td>
<td>Presidential Secretariat for Women</td>
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<td>SICA</td>
<td>Central American Integration System</td>
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<td>SIEGPA</td>
<td>Gender Statistical Information System</td>
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<td>SUMEVIG</td>
<td>Unified System of Statistics on Gender-based violence</td>
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<td>SVRI</td>
<td>Sexual Violence Research Initiative</td>
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<td>UCCAEP</td>
<td>Costa Rican Union of Chambers and Associations of the Private Business Sector</td>
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<td>UIM</td>
<td>Ibero-American Union of Municipalists</td>
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<td>UNCT</td>
<td>United Nations Country Teams</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNETE</td>
<td>United Nations Emergency Technical Team</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>UNHRC</td>
<td>United Nations Human Rights Council</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIMUJER/ODAC</td>
<td>Institutional Units of Specialized Care for Women Victims</td>
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<td>UNiTE</td>
<td>End Violence Against Women campaign</td>
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<td>UNODC</td>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
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<td>UNSDG</td>
<td>United Nations Sustainable Development Group</td>
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<td>UPR</td>
<td>Universal Periodic Reviews of the HRC</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>UNV</td>
<td>United Nations Volunteers</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<td>WPL</td>
<td>Women Political Leaders Global Forum</td>
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PRESENTATION

It is a pleasure to present this report, which highlights the contributions and results of UN Women in favor of gender equality and women’s empowerment in Latin America and the Caribbean for the period 2016–2018.

During that period, the region experienced social transformations that resulted in a generational renewal of the feminist movement and the emergence of new voices that have come to the defense of women’s rights.

At the same time, the challenges facing the region remain many and complex. Femicides / feminicides have taken the lives of thousands of women and multiple forms of violence against women and girls persist in many spaces. Gender equality is also hampered by, among others, the persistent wage gap and the disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic and care work, the limited space for women’s political participation, including in conflict mediation, as well as violence against women in politics and human rights defenders.

In response to these challenges, the organization has made contributions, in close alliance with several partners from the public and private sectors, civil society and the United Nations, which have contributed to the progress of the countries in the areas of economic empowerment, leadership and political participation, peace and security and ending violence against women.

Throughout this report, we highlight the results achieved in areas such as parity democracy, the elimination of discriminatory legislation, the inclusion of women in the labor market, the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid domestic and care work, the expansion of universal social protection systems with a gender focus, the work of women in conflict prevention and mediation, as well as the inclusion of a gender perspective in climate change adaptation and mitigation and in the response to migratory flows in the region.

I want to acknowledge the leadership of Luiza Carvalho and Lara Blanco, who, together with the 16 UN Women offices in the region, drove the growth of the organization and its impact on the region during the period covered by this report.

María Noel Vaeza
Regional Director, Americas and the Caribbean
This report provides an overview of the activities carried out by UN Women in Latin America and the Caribbean during the 2016-2018 period. The period is not arbitrary; those familiar with the organization will note that it coincides with the previous Strategic Note, which precedes the adoption of the current Strategic Note for the 2019-2021 period.
More importantly, the report addresses the period of the previous Strategic Note and highlights the coherence and synergistic nature of many initiatives that could not be properly evaluated if considered in isolation or outside their broader context.

The activities mentioned in the following pages were carried out by the UN Women country offices, the Caribbean Multi-Country Office and the programmatic offices, as well as the Regional Office. The objective is to make visible the main strategic lines that guided our work over the past three years, without focusing excessively on the institutional actors.

The report aims to reveal those social, political and cultural changes promoted or supported by UN Women, generally in association with national partners (women’s organizations, state and government institutions, the academic sector, private companies), as well as with international partners (women’s networks, international NGOs) and multilateral organizations. It emphasizes work with other United Nations agencies, as well as associations with other agencies such as the Organization of American States (OAS) or the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB).

These have been years of intense and profound change for all the entities involved in this report: the Latin American and Caribbean region, the United Nations and UN Women.

In 2016, a large part of Latin America and the Caribbean was already experiencing the consequences of the end of the expansion cycle associated with the export of raw materials that provided a vigorous push for many economies in the region at the beginning of the 21st century and which, in the hands of “progressive” governments, led to significant social transformations, notably the decline in the population living in poverty and the emergence of new, though precarious, middle classes.

The accelerated rollout and deepening of economic globalization and the associated liberal values elicited diverse reactions throughout the world. Latin America and the Caribbean are no exception, where one of the most conspicuous features of this reaction has been the strengthening of conservative movements that work against - totally or partially, openly or covertly - liberal values, particularly those that extend the rights and freedoms of women.

The banner of these movements has been the fight against women’s sexual and reproductive rights, but their positions in other areas also tend to support the traditional and conservative order. The transformation of these groups into a political force is not recent, but their growth and strengthening are.

These groups and the political forces they have articulated are a factor that can no longer be ignored by any organization that advocates for equal opportunities and women’s empowerment. Fortunately, this coincides with the generational renewal of the feminist movement in the region; new voices and new faces go out to the streets, demanding advances for greater equality and the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

The United Nations, for its part, is also engaged in a process of restructuring and major reforms. One of its most relevant aspects is the ongoing reformulation of the business model of the different agencies and programmes.
that operate at the country level, to improve effectiveness and efficiency. From now on, the aim is to achieve increasingly closer coordination and collaboration of the different agencies in pursuit of common objectives, which are none other than those identified in the 2030 Agenda. UN Women is, of course, fully involved in this process.

All of this coincides with the transformation of the former United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) into the current UN Women, a transformation that goes well beyond a simple name change to target the work style and identity of the organization. In Latin America and the Caribbean, we have managed this transition by preserving and improving some very positive UNIFEM traditions such as maintaining close ties with civil society organizations and movements.

However, without a doubt, one of the inherent challenges in this change was to develop the ability to expand our presence in the region and create the flagships that will position us as a specialized partner to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. All this occurred at a time when many donors left the region, in a crowded field with various institutional actors increasing their engagement on gender equality. Thus, UN Women should position itself as a leading organization in the field, while assuming the role of facilitator within the United Nations.

The work carried out to this end in recent years has been intense and very diverse. We will briefly mention a few emblematic examples.

Of note is the Advocacy Framework to consolidate parity democracy adopted by the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (Parlatino) and its discussion and implementation in several countries of the region. The model law on femicide, developed in collaboration with the OAS, is another example of a partnership that is not only successful but also productive since several countries and subnational entities have recently passed legislation on the issue. The research that led to the report *Progress of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean 2017* was equally satisfactory, as much for the development and analysis process that is required as for the rich discussions that it produced. It is very gratifying to note that awareness about the importance of women’s economic empowerment continues to grow in the region, beyond the macroeconomic vicissitudes to which we will always be subject. Likewise, we are pleased to note that the efforts made by several organizations - including UN Women - over several years, to generate disaggregated statistical data, are on the right track and yield increasingly better results, as evidenced by the creation of the Global Centre of Excellence on Gender Statistics (CEGS) and the organization of the International Meeting on Gender Statistics in Aguascalientes, Mexico.

The organization of regional consultations in preparation for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) sessions is another relevant and satisfactory chapter of the work during this period, due to the diversity of people and organizations that participated in the process and the richness of the discussions that took place. The joint production of solid conceptual and politically-rich consensus documents has been very relevant to the continued advancement of the rights of women in their diversity at the global level. The coordination of United Nations agencies and programmes in joint initiatives through the Inter-Agency Gender Theme Groups has also been of great
value, as evidenced by UNiTE and its Orange Day campaign to end violence against women. We could not conclude this rapid (and incomplete) account without mentioning at least some of the new regional programmes that have been launched in recent years: the ATENEA project, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Idea International, aimed at increasing the political participation of women; the Win-Win project, funded by the European Union and focused on women’s economic empowerment with the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Spotlight project between the United Nations and the European Union, aimed at eradicating violence against women and femicide/feminicide, as well as the regional programme for the elimination of child marriage and early unions co-led by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Likewise, it is important to highlight the position of UN Women in response to mixed flows from Venezuela and the projects launched to assist women and girls affected by this situation in Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador.

We are convinced that this set of initiatives and many more that will be discussed briefly in the pages that follow, have yielded and will continue to bear fruit, supported by women’s organizations, by national mechanisms for the advancement of women and, hopefully, increasingly more political authorities in the region. No change is easy, this we know well enough for women. And, as the Uruguayan poet and singer María Elena Walsh says: “who was not a woman / or a worker / thinks that yesterday / was a better time...” The changes already achieved are many and evident and, with direction and without pause, we continue to advance at “full sail”.
It is daring to consider Latin America and the Caribbean as a region, and to do so represents a permanent challenge. Even if we focus on the subregions that make up this enormous geography, the challenges persist.
In the Caribbean alone, the realities differ greatly from Cuba and the Dominican Republic - Spanish speakers settled in large island territories - to Barbados and the microstates of the Eastern Caribbean, not to mention the non-sovereign territories that actively participate in the regional entities of the Caribbean such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). There is also the case of Haiti, which faces great challenges in terms of poverty and vulnerability to disasters. In addition, the Caribbean is not only insular but includes countries like Belize and Guyana.

Several centuries separate the reality of the indigenous peoples and that of metropolitan centres of the Central American isthmus, and the differences that exist between the region’s Pacific and Caribbean coasts are overwhelming. The countries of the Andean region extend from the Amazon to the Andes and the oceans, and their current realities range from peace agreements in Colombia to the situation in Venezuela; from Afrodescendent communities to the indigenous peoples of the Andean Highlands. Mexico and Brazil are subcontinents in themselves, with infinite realities, including some unknown like those of the people who avoid contact with global civilization. And the remaining nations of the Southern Cone are no less complicated or free of contrasts.

However, in this overwhelmingly diverse region, there are common elements. Some are in the past, such as the struggles for independence and the processes of formation and evolution of States. Others extend to the present, including efforts to establish and preserve a democratic culture, the defence of national sovereignty and investments in development. They share limitations as countries that have fallen into the middle-income trap and are affected by economic and social deficits accompanied by vast inequalities. They also share the situation of gap and delay, rights violations and violence against women, who constitute half of the region’s 640 million inhabitants¹.

It is evident that not all women in Latin America and the Caribbean live in the same conditions. The reality of a woman of African descent in a small town on the Colombian Pacific coast is quite different from that of a young granddaughter of Swedish immigrants residing in São Paulo. Upon careful examination, however, we will find that both have experienced situations of sexual abuse or harassment at some point in their lives; we will find that both assume a more significant burden for domestic responsibilities and the care of their children and older adults than their male relatives; we will find that their salaries are lower than that of male co-workers who fulfill the same functions; we will find that their chances of accessing leadership positions in the company they work for - be it small, medium or large - are lower; and that they also face considerably more difficulties in assuming management positions in the political organizations with which they are affiliated. And, for all these reasons, it is not an easy decision for either of them to run

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¹. The figure does not include the inhabitants of non-sovereign territories or of limited sovereignty.
for public office in their municipalities or start a political career at the national level. Their vulnerability to disaster is also higher, and their opportunities to participate in dialogue and peacebuilding processes is lower.

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**BOX 1.**
**Latin America and the Caribbean: Inequality figures for women and girls**

| PEOPLE | 4 out of 10 girls (15-19 years old) have experienced violence from their partners at one point in their lives. |
|        | 1.1 million girls (15-19 years old) have experienced sexual violence (most of the aggressors are men from their immediate environment). |
|        | The first sexual experience of 50% of adolescents in the region has been involuntary or coerced. |
|        | 21% of women in the region have experienced physical or sexual violence by their partner in the last 12 months. |
|        | Almost one in four girls in Latin America marry before the age of 18, Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region in the world where child marriage is not in decline. |
|        | It is the second region in the world in teenage pregnancies, 20% of live births are children of adolescent mothers. |

| PLANET | Women represent less than 12% of the population benefiting from the agrarian reform processes. |
|        | Women in charge of an agricultural holding range from 8% in Belize and Guatemala to no more than 30% in Chile, Jamaica and Saint Lucia. |
|        | In the region, it is estimated that 8.4 million people live in the path of a hurricane and 29 million in flood areas. Women, particularly those living in poverty, are disproportionately affected by disasters and have different and uneven levels of resilience. |

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2. Unless otherwise indicated in the table, the figures were taken from the publication “Commitments and Roadmap for a Planet 50-50 by 2030”, UNSDG LAC, 2017.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEACE AND GOVERNANCE</th>
<th>6 out of 10 migrant women are victims of rape on their way to the US.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 of the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicide are in Latin America and the Caribbean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.5% of the representatives in local legislative bodies are women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.7% of parliamentarians are women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In 13 LAC countries, women make up less than 20% of parliamentarians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barely 14.6% of mayors are women in Latin America.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROSPERITY</th>
<th>The regional average of women without their own income reached 29.4%, while it was 10.7% for men in 2017.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Latin America, the feminization of poverty index remained stable and high between 2012 and 2017, around 113. The feminization of poverty index reflects the percentage of women between 20 and 59 years old living in poverty compared to the proportion of men living in poverty in Latin America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female labour participation averaged 50.2% in the third quarter of 2017, compared to a male participation rate of 74.4%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The average hourly wage of men is higher than that of women. The most significant difference is found among service workers since women have 19.8% lower hourly wages than men; this is precisely the occupation that concentrates the most substantial proportion of women in the labour market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The average unemployment rates in Latin America and the Caribbean are 10.4% for women and 7.6% for men, so the gap between the two continues to exceed 2.8 percentage points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time-use surveys of 18 countries in the region show that women spend between one fifth and one-third of their time on domestic work and unpaid care, compared to approximately 10% for men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the five countries of the region for which information is available - Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala and the Plurinational State of Bolivia - although on average the percentage of young people who do not study or work decreased between 2002 and 2014, this decrease was not homogeneous in the different population groups: women and people of African descent were in the most disadvantaged situation. On average, in these five countries, 34% of women of African descent do not work or study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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5. Idem 3.
7. Figures from the Quadrennial Report on Regional Progress and Challenges in Relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, 2019.
### PARTNERSHIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Only 5% of the foreign aid funds were allocated to gender equality as the main objective in the period 2012-2013.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In 2014, only 1% of all funding in fragile states went to women’s groups or women’s ministries.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The national women’s mechanisms are the governing bodies for the coordination of government policies for the mainstreaming of gender equality, of which 58% in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean are Ministries or mechanisms with ministerial rank.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region that has the Regional Women’s Conference coordinated by ECLAC and an Intergovernmental Regional Gender Strategy and the SDGs, the Montevideo Strategy, in addition to different regional coordination mechanisms that play a role in monitoring the implementation of the SDGs from a gender perspective, such as the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the Organization of American States (OAS); the Council of Women’s Affairs Ministers of Central America and the Dominican Republic (COMMCA) of the Central American Integration System (SICA); the Andean Advisory Council of High-Level Authorities on Women and Equal Opportunities (CAAAMI) of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN); and the Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities for Women (RMAAM) of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR).</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Only 23% of the data needed to track gender-specific indicators are up to date, that is, from 2010 or subsequent years. And only 16% of that data is available for two or more specific times in order to track trends.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.1. HANGOVER FROM A DECADE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

The region has undergone radical changes in recent decades in all areas. The 21st century brought with it a vigorous cycle of economic growth that abruptly ceased with the global financial crisis in 2014.

This growth cycle coincided with a wave of progressive governments in many of the countries in the region. Poverty and inequality decreased, while life expectancy and educational rates increased. In Latin America and the Caribbean, significant progress was made with respect to living standards and gender equality. Never before have such high levels of public investment been achieved in policies to eradicate poverty and inequality. For example, the current enrollment and graduation rate of women and girls in secondary and university education surpasses, in most countries, that of men; women increased their participation in the labour force from 45% to 56% in the last decade; and the gender wage gap narrowed by 9% in that same period. The income of women improved: between 2002 and 2014, the percentage of women without income decreased from 42% to 29%. In addition, the fertility rate fell from 3.5% to

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2.3% between 1990 and 2015. Access to modern contraceptive methods increased from 44% to 60%, although not all groups have the same level of access. Today, 18 countries in Latin America have specialized legislation on femicide, twice the number of countries in 2008. The adoption of specific legislation and the understanding of femicides as hate crimes opens a space for debate. However, gaps in gender, education, income, age, ethnic and urban-rural origin persist in a region with the highest level of income inequality on the planet.

More recently, the advances registered in the last decades in terms of gender equality, have generated a social and political movement opposed to women’s empowerment and the advancement of equality. This conservative and reactive wave against women’s rights today spreads throughout the region, encouraged by ultra-conservative movements often linked to fundamentalism. As a result, some countries in the region have experienced legislative setbacks, which requires feminist movements and others that support the expansion of women’s freedoms, to adopt clear strategies and, above all, strengthen their ability to unite in defence of these rights.

2.2. THE VALUE OF PARTNERING

In this dynamic, complex, diverse and challenging context, the UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean carries out its work, faithful to the threefold institutional mandate of improving State regulations to achieve international standards for the protection of women’s rights and gender equality; develop programmes that directly affect the welfare of women through their protection and empowerment; and coordinate actions with other United Nations agencies, governments of the region, the private sector and civil society organizations, as well as international agencies and organizations with the same objectives.

In the case of a regional office such as that of the Americas and the Caribbean, this coordination begins first with the UN Women’s national, multi-country and programmatic offices in the region. Nothing or almost nothing of what we do, we do alone. In Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as throughout the world, UN Women joins forces with governments, institutions, companies, women’s organizations and people who promote women’s rights and gender equality.
A good example of the diversity of partners and actors involved in the projects promoted by UN Women in the region is the work carried out in El Salvador during 2018 in the lead up to the presidential elections held on February 2019.

On this occasion, UN Women partnered with the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) with the objective of promoting parity democracy, that is, increasing the presence and participation of women in the positions of political responsibility of government institutions. The partnership supported the signing of an Agreement to Guarantee the Human Rights of Women in the 2019 Presidential Elections, which was subscribed to by all presidential and vice-presidential candidates. The Agreement included a commitment to parity democracy, the promotion of gender parity in the ministerial cabinet, a commitment to promote women’s human rights and gender equality in all government and public plans and strategies, the inclusion of a gender perspective in public budgets, the adoption of policies for the women’s economic empowerment and guarantees for women’s access to justice, and the strengthening of the principles of equality, non-discrimination and non-violence in education and culture. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal, and the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women (ISDEMU) and the Parliamentary Group of Women in the Legislative Assembly (GPM) endorsed the agreement, with UN Women, UNDP and NIMD as witnesses. A quick count shows 10 different organizations involved in the initiative, including the four parties and political coalitions that participated in the voting. This represents the transition from government policies to State commitments, and it was, the first comprehensive commitment to gender equality of this kind signed in El Salvador.
**BOX 3.**
**UN WOMEN REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN**
Civil society allies, partners and stakeholders (February 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic areas</th>
<th>Regional and global civil society networks/organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Political participation and governance| Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIHR)  
Ibero-American Union of Municipalists (UIM)  
Transparency International  
University of Salamanca  
Documentation and Studies Centre (CDE)  
Women Political Leaders Global Forum (WPL)  
Parlatino  
ParlAméricas | **Economic empowerment**  
Central American Network of Rural, Indigenous and Peasant Women (RECMURIC)  
Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA)  
Network of Indigenous Youth of Central America and Mexico  
Indigenous Council of Central America (CICA)  
Oxfam  
FLACSO  
Latin American Centre for Rural Development (RIMISP)  
Centre for Distributive, Labour and Social Studies (CEDLAS) of the National University of La Plata, Argentina  
Association of Domestic, Home Based and Maquila Female Workers (ATRAHDOM)  
Institute for Business Development of Argentina (IDEA), Argentina  
Costa Rican Union of Chambers and Associations of the Private Business Sector (UCCAEP)  
Simone de Beauvoir Leadership Institute (ILSB)  
Documentation and Studies Centre (CDE)  
Latin American Justice and Gender Team (ELA)  
Media: Inter Press Service (IPS) |
### Norms and legal frameworks for equality

- University of Tarapacá, CONADI
- Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC)
- Interdisciplinary Centre for Development Studies (CIEDUR), Uruguay
- Chirapaq
- Marcosur Feminist Articulation (AFM)
- Cotidiano Mujer
- Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women (RMAAD)

Members of regional CSAG: [http://lac.unwomen.org/es/noticias-y-eventos/articulos/2016/02/integrantes-grupo-asesor](http://lac.unwomen.org/es/noticias-y-eventos/articulos/2016/02/integrantes-grupo-asesor)

### Ending violence against women and girls

- Just Associates (JASS)
- Mesoamerican Women Human Rights Defenders Initiative and Centre for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)
- Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI)
- Circle of Women with Disabilities (CIMUDIS)
- Centre for Social Studies and Public Opinion (CESOP) of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Central University of Chile
- Humanas Corporation
- PROMUNDO
- Girls Not Brides
- Plan International
- Ibero-American Association of Public Ministries

Media: Forbes Central America, La Nación (Costa Rica), EFE Agency
ICW Latina (Regional Community of Women with HIV AIDS)

### Peace, security and humanitarian action

- Diakonia
- CEJIL
- Mesoamerican Women Human Rights Defenders Initiative
- CEPIA
- Igarapé Institute
- Institute of Migration and Human Rights
- Huairou Commission
- Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
Another relevant example of the forms of association of UN Women is the *Vidas Negras* media campaign developed in 2017 in Brazil by the Inter-agency Group on Gender and Race, the Youth Group and the Communications Group. It involved all United Nations agencies with a country presence.

The campaign raised awareness of the impact of violence on youth of African descent and recognized the different ways in which violence affects women and men of African descent. In Brazil, about 23,000 black youths die violently every year. Of every 100 people killed, 71 are black, and while the homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants fell by 12% between 2005 and 2015 for non-blacks, it increased by 18% for blacks in the same period. In January 2018, the campaign was recognized as the best social impact campaign in Brazil and attracted the interest and commitment of social media influencers, reaching more than 34 million people in Brazil.

This example is especially relevant in the framework of the ongoing reform of the United Nations development system since inter-agency work will be prioritized in interactions with governments and other actors in society, not only for gender equality but in all areas related to the mandates of agencies working in one or more development dimensions. In this scenario, the mission of UN Women is to ensure the incorporation of a gender perspective in inter-agency work and to provide the necessary technical tools for its successful implementation.

### 2.3. BETWEEN THE RESPONSE AND THE PROPOSAL

The work of UN Women can also be presented from its dual function of offering responses to different regional events and acting as a vector and enhancer of transformative proposals for gender equality.

Within the first category, there are, for example, all the humanitarian response actions in which UN Women participates. This represents a significant number in a region that is regularly hit by hurricanes, earthquakes, droughts, famine and volcanic eruptions. In addition, there are humanitarian emergencies caused by political unrest and sudden or massive migratory flows, such as the recent flows in northern Central America and Venezuela. This will be discussed later.

In a regional context of growing ultra conservative forces against gender equality and women’s human rights, UN Women’s responses are also not limited, as further illustrated in various sections of this report.

We do not wish to conclude this introductory section on a pessimistic or negative note, since, despite these barriers, there have been many and significant recent advances in gender equality and women’s rights.

One relevant area where this is easily verified is that of women’s political participation. Today, Latin America is a leader in parity democracy, both in terms of the development of conceptual reference frameworks and of certain practices, all of which, little by little, increases the participation of women in politics, as evidenced by representation in the legislature with an average of 30.7% of women in the lower houses, as well as in electoral processes such as that of Mexico in 2018 (48.2% of women in Congress and 49.2% in the Senate).

This is the result of many regional and national efforts and initiatives. One of them, in which
UN Women is fully involved, is the ATENEA mechanism. Like almost all the initiatives in which UN Women participates, it is a joint initiative with other organizations, in this case, IDEA International and UNDP, and provides a very good illustration of the purposeful and transformative nature of many of our efforts.

Through the ATENEA mechanism, an index of political parity was designed to measure the real exercise of women’s political rights and the minimum conditions necessary for their exercise and performance in a given country and at a regional comparative level, through eight dimensions of analysis and 40 indicators.

However, ATENEA is not limited to diagnosis: it proposes mechanisms to accelerate the process of women’s integration into politics, through information, analysis, communication and the generation of dialogue. The mechanism has been implemented in Argentina, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru since 2016; and has since been implemented by Chile, Honduras, Panama and Uruguay. The findings of the political parity index were presented in the Senate of Argentina with the support of the Women’s Caucus of the National Senate and the National Council of Women and fed the debate that led to the approval of political parity in Argentina at the end of 2017.

In 2018, three new countries – Colombia, Brazil and Bolivia - joined the initiative, beginning the implementation of their respective political parity indexes. The results of the project have been disseminated throughout the region, stimulating debate and generating transformative initiatives in other countries, such as the Regional Network for Joint Democracy, presented in Costa Rica in early 2019.

SOME RELEVANT ACHIEVEMENTS

In recent years, UN Women has succeeded in reaching spaces for discussion and achieved closer relations with the governments of the region. This was the result, to some extent, of the publication of the Progress of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean 2017 regional report. The strategy for disseminating research through high-level forums in various countries made it possible to renew and deepen communication channels with governmental entities, since the report contains very specific recommendations for the response to the diversity of women’s situations in the region, characterized as “sticky floors”, “broken ladders” and “glass ceilings”, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this report.

Also worth noting are the efforts made to produce, systematize and disseminate relevant and high-quality information. The commitment to excellence in knowledge management has been one of the hallmarks of the work of UN Women in the region. These efforts - aimed at positioning the issue of gender equality on the public
agenda through strong evidence, as well as stimulating a more sophisticated reflection on public policies and reducing inequalities – will also be discussed in subsequent sections.

Thirdly, it is important to mention the development of an “action model” to increase the efficiency and sustainability of UN Women in the region. It is a strategic reflection that positions the agency’s challenges and opportunities in a heterogeneous region and in the context of United Nations reform. Within the framework of this “action model”, the five priority thematic areas for the agency’s work include women’s political participation and governance systems; women’s economic empowerment; eradication of violence against women and girls; women’s rights; and women, peace, security and humanitarian action. The model also requires six components for action: 1) a deep understanding of the reality of the region; 2) a precise definition of the groups of people and organizations that UN Women intends to target with its interventions; 3) key partnerships and alliances; 4) relevant programmatic offers for women, aligned with the SDGs; 5) assertive and focused communication strategy, and 6) calculation of the costs to carry out all of the above.

In the following chapters, we will discuss in more detail the work of UN Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighting the main strategic lines that guide it, as well as some significant achievements and relevant challenges.
THE 2030 AGENDA AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AS A HORIZON

Deyanira Cordoba, pertenece a una familia de caficultores en Tablón de Gómez, Nariño, Colombia. UN Women / Ryan Brown.
Since the UN General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Agenda, or the 2030 Agenda, in September 2015 as a roadmap for the following fifteen years, the efforts of all United Nations agencies are directly or indirectly, to a greater or lesser extent, aimed at leaving no one behind, as proclaimed by one of the principles and slogans of the Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Civil society, particularly feminist organizations in the region, has played a central role in positioning SDG 5 on gender equality and women’s empowerment in global negotiations.

As global ties deepen and strengthen, it becomes more evident than ever that the fate of all depends on women’s choice. Women’s active engagement is necessary to tackle environmental challenges such as mitigating the effects of climate change on global warming, to address economic challenges such as the concentration of global wealth in fewer and fewer hands, as well as other social challenges such as the persistent female face of poverty. Only energetic and sustained action by the different social, public and private actors can reverse these situations and trends.

Beyond SDG 5, it is essential to ensure a gender perspective in all SDGs based on gender-sensitive goals and indicators. As the report *Turning Promises into Action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, “while the SDGs provide a framework for action, the capacity to use them to deliver results at the national level will depend on various factors, including political mobilization, the allocation of adequate resources and the implementation of effective policies and programmes.”

One of the innovative aspects of the 2030 Agenda is precisely that it calls upon all social actors to join the initiative - specifically the private sector and civil society - and not only governments and political actors in general, as it had to date. This generates new opportunities for mobilization and social participation to ensure compliance with the commitments assumed by the States.

### 3.1. ADVOCACY IN RELEVANT GLOBAL AND REGIONAL FORUMS

In 2016, UN Women actively contributed to the XIII Regional Conference on Women, which was held in Uruguay and was explicitly dedicated to the theme of gender equality and sustainable development.

UN Women provided technical and financial support to the Government of Uruguay, which presided the Conference during the period 2016-2019; to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) as an organizer; and to representatives of government and civil society in the different phases of preparation of the subregional consultations and during the Conference; in addition to leading the organization of five side events and collaborating with four others dedicated to different high-priority topics for the region.

The event led to the adoption of the Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda in the framework of Sustainable Development by 2030, a regional intergovernmental agreement that includes 10 programmatic axes and 74 specific measures agreed to by the leading authorities on women and gender issues from all the countries in the region.

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10. "*Turning Promises into Action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*", pg. 24.
region, aimed at implementing sectoral and cross-cutting policies to eliminate structural gender inequalities and ensure the effective enjoyment of women’s rights. In the framework of the conference, UN Women also supported the presentation of ISO Quito and ISO Montevideo, two feminist tools for political advocacy and monitoring of the State’s commitments on women’s rights and gender equality, led and produced by the Marcosur Feminist Articulation (AFM) since 2007.

UN Women was also present at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) held in Ecuador in October 2016. Thanks to the work of UN Women, the final document incorporated the concept of “multilevel governance with parity”, and also referenced unpaid domestic work, the care economy and gender-sensitive budgets, issues that, from our perspective, are central to gender equality in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Since 2017, as part of the United Nations Group for Sustainable Development (UNSDG), UN Women actively participates in the regional forums of the Latin American and Caribbean countries on sustainable development coordinated by ECLAC, in order to ensure that the gender approach is integrated into the agenda and forum discussions.

3.2. WITH THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE REGION TO ADVANCE THE 2030 AGENDA
UN Women assumes the role of gender equality specialist for the Sustainable Development Agenda, both before the governments of the world and before international organizations, civil society institutions and United Nations agencies. In this sense, it supports and accompanies the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in their process of generating reliable information to monitor progress towards the implementation of the Agenda. For example, between 2016 and 2018, UN Women accompanied the national women’s organizations of Argentina, Costa Rica, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay in the formulation and evaluation of new gender equality plans aligned with the Sustainable Development Agenda.

But the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals requires much more than good intentions. It involves sound information and accurate and reliable measurement mechanisms. Therefore, UN Women has focused on improving the data available in this area. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the active participation in the Working Group on Gender Statistics of the Statistical Conference of the Americas (ECA-ECLAC) and the organization of annual international meetings of experts on time-use surveys and unpaid labour, held in Mexico since 2002 and co-sponsored by UN Women, ECLAC, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) and the National Institute of Women (INMUJERES), as well as the International Meeting on Gender Statistics, which has also been held annually in Mexico since 2000. The events were attended by representatives of national statistical offices, as well as national mechanisms for the advancement of women (MAM), from many countries in the region. These events offer opportunities to share knowledge, innovation and good practices on gender statistics worldwide and led to the creation and launch of the CEEG in September 2018 in partnership with INEGI. The information produced by the CEEG will be aligned with UN Women’s global
flagship programme in this area: “Making Every Woman and Girl Count”.

Additionally, joint work has been developed with national statistics and information analysis offices in different countries, including Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico and Paraguay. UN Women’s advocacy actions facilitated the mainstreaming of the SDGs into national development plans, highlighting the direct work with planning offices for the application of gender-differentiated indices in Colombia, Ecuador and Guatemala. It is also worth mentioning the know-how that UN Women provides for the development of the Gender ATLAS in Mexico, Paraguay and Chile. Discussions for its application in Brazil and the Dominican Republic are ongoing. The Gender ATLAS is an online database that measures different dimensions of gender equality and is hosted and fed by the respective national statistical offices of these countries.

The support and advisory work with the governments of the region for the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda varies greatly and usually involves various government agencies. For example, in 2018, UN Women organized, together with the Council of Women’s Affairs Ministers of Central America and the Dominican Republic (COMMCA) and the Council of Ministers of Finance of Central America (COSEFIN), a workshop to adapt the global methodology for measuring progress for indicator 5.c.1 of the 2030 Agenda: “5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment” to the Central American context.

In Colombia, UN Women accompanied the National Planning Directorate (DNP) to design the evaluation of the National Public Policy on Gender Equality (CONPES 161) and to develop methodological guides for the inclusion of the gender approach in its evaluation systems. In the Dominican Republic, UN Women participated in the evaluation of the National Plan for Gender Equality (PLANEG) with the Ministry of Women, an inter-agency initiative in collaboration with UNFPA at the national and regional levels. Similarly, technical assistance was provided to develop a gender annex for the Evaluation Manual of the Secretariat of Planning and Development (SENPLADES) of Ecuador, in order to mainstream the gender equality perspective in its evaluation processes, in addition to training government officials in the evaluation of gender-sensitive information. In Costa Rica, UN Women accompanied the National Institute for Women (INAMU) and the Ministry of Development and Planning (MIDEPLAN) in the evaluation of the Policy for Gender Equality and Equity (PIEG); a guide was also developed to mainstream gender equality and human rights in the Evaluation Manual of the Ministry of National Planning. In Argentina, it advised the Government of the City of Buenos Aires during the development of the Gender Indicators System, with a view to strengthening the accountability of gender equality commitments under the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the subnational level. In addition, UN Women accompanied the Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI) to mainstream the gender approach through indicators in its cooperation programmes.

3.3. COORDINATION TO ACHIEVE MORE AND BETTER RESULTS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE REGION

UN Women’s mandate is to coordinate United Nations agencies, funds and programmes
to maximize achievements for women and girls in the region. As such, the UN Women Regional Office participated in the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, led by the Statistics Division of ECLAC as Technical Secretariat. Within this context, participants reviewed the proposal for the regional framework of indicators for the monitoring of the SDGs to be presented at the XVII Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, based on the results of the prioritization exercise carried out by the countries of the Group. Subsequent sessions analysed the results of the prioritization of each of the SDGs in detail. The review was carried out by representatives of the 10 countries of the region that make up the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, and observer country, representatives of ECLAC in their capacity as Group Secretariat participated in the activity, as well as UNFPA, UN Women and UNICEF, representing the regional coordination mechanism for the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

UN Women also leads the regional inter-agency group for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, consisting of 18 United Nations agencies. This group has been very active in positioning gender equality in the regional SDG forums coordinated by ECLAC. One example is the preparation of the report Commitments and a Roadmap for a Planet 50-50 produced by the inter-agency gender group led by UN Women, which was presented at a side event of the SDG Regional Forum in Mexico in April 2017. This report and the side event are considered a “best practice” of regional coordination and demonstrate the capacity of UN Women to establish partnerships and influence the regional SDG agenda.

As part of the integrated support to the United Nations in the different countries of the region, UN Women promotes the inclusion of the gender approach in United Nations strategies and programmes, as is the case with the Common Country Analysis or the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, tools that allow the United Nations to adjust its actions to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

UN Women also supports governments that require technical assistance in mainstreaming the gender approach and data disaggregation by sex and other variables in the national voluntary reports on the implementation of the SDGs presented each July at the High-Level Political Forum in New York.

To this end, the work of UN Women offices accompanies the governments of the region, guides and supports them in the mainstreaming of the gender approach and women’s empowerment for the achievement of the SDGs, since - we repeat it once again— the gender equality perspective is a cross-cutting approach in the 2030 Agenda, and it is not possible to move forward without embedding it at the government level as well.
Janet Camilo holds a law degree from the Pedro Henríquez Ureña National University and a master’s degree in Political Science from the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo. She is a university professor of Constitutional Law, Political Science and Public and Private International Law. She is vice president of the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPPAL Women), member of Socialist International Women and president of the Latin American Institute for Women and Politics. Since August 2016, she has held the position of Minister of Women, appointed by President Danilo Medina through Decree No. 201-16.

1. We would like you to share a brief assessment of the current situation for the promotion and advancement of women’s rights and gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean. Where are we, and what is being done right now?

The Latin American and Caribbean region has made progress in women’s political autonomy, some countries have achieved parity congresses, quota laws... more and more women participate in the political sphere, even though the parties are still very male-dominated, very machista. Women’s economic and labour empowerment is also being addressed to overcome the wage gap and to ensure that more and more women occupy key positions, both in private and public administration.

But there are significant challenges. One is gender-based violence, which manifests itself in political parties, in the streets, in the workplace, in schools, in relationships, in the family, in gynecological and obstetric care.

In fact, another challenge for Latin America is that of sexual and reproductive rights and access to sexual and reproductive health services in order to improve women’s health, including teenage pregnancy rates, maternal mortality, infant mortality.

It is also essential that the governments of Latin America assume the commitment to educate about equality to foster a new way of socializing and managing power between boys and girls.

2. In recent years, the Government of the Dominican Republic has promoted...
various initiatives and assumed a role of regional and international leadership in promoting gender equality. What are the reasons behind this?

It is a maturation process. We have been working in the Dominican Republic for many years through the women’s movement and through the State, developing tools and public policies to increase the visibility of the equality agenda.

For example, both in the field of women’s economic empowerment and leadership, we have made progress with programmes such as “Igualando RD”, aimed at private companies, but also in the public sector with the creation of four pilot ministries, in addition to assuming the IDB agenda, reflected in our parity initiative.

Plans have also been developed for the prevention of teenage pregnancies and the prevention of maternal and infant mortality (Ministry of Health), as well as an internal strategy for gender and equality policies in schools (Ministry of Education) to prevent violence and all kinds of discrimination, but above all to build a culture of peace where men and women can enjoy the full exercise of their rights and duties.

3. How has UN Women accompanied international, regional and national processes relevant to gender equality in recent years?

UN Women has played an important role in accompanying the formulation, execution and monitoring and evaluation of public gender policies promoted by the Ministry of Women, created in 1982.

UN Women has participated in all public policy design processes and has been able, in difficult times, to help us find ways out of our own context here in the Dominican Republic.

4. There are those who do not quite understand the importance of generating public budgets and establishing national strategies for mainstreaming gender equality in public policies. Could you address the significance of these measures based on your country’s experience?

The Dominican Republic is developing its third National Plan for Gender Equality and Equity Policies, the PLANEG, which is aligned with the SDGs and the National Development Strategy of our country, which was passed into law.

Planning is essential to achieve results. In addition to PLANEG, we have tools that have shown us the importance of gender mainstreaming, such as the “Igualando RD” seal, which is an equality seal that works with private companies on gender mainstreaming, promoting essential changes in business and employment to narrow or eliminate existing gaps - wage gap, internal promotion, flexible work-maternity reconciliation hours, paternity leave - from a co-responsibility approach to men’s participation in care work.

Another tool of the Ministry of Women is the Equality Observatory, which allows for the
monitoring of the commitments assumed by the State in each area responsible for planning and implementing public policies.

There are also, of course, gender-responsive budgets. In the Dominican Republic, we have been working with gender-responsive budgets for around seven years, already present in nine ministries.

5. In the case of the Dominican Republic, how is gender-responsive planning and budgeting articulated at the national level with the local/municipal level?

In the Dominican Republic, we have a strategic alliance between the Ministry of Women and the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development. Together we promote the gender mainstreaming agenda. One of the first ministries to assume the commitment was the Ministry of Finance and its General Budget Directorate, which have supported us and valued, internalized and understood the importance of gender-responsive budgets.

After a process of sensitization and once the actors engaged in budgeting realized this, it has been possible to build budgetary tools that can ensure that each ministry committed to this agenda includes gender items in its budget that guarantee the implementation of plans, projects and actions.

6. How have these measures been received among political operators, public officials and public opinion? Has there been opposition and resistance?

First, for public administration officials, we have had to go through a process of raising awareness, conversation and dialogue so that they understand what it means to tag resources for gender equality, and that this name, this identification of a budget item benefits public policies that will achieve equality. We have had to explain to them the impact that these gender-responsive budgets have on women, children, family and society, and the importance for President Medina’s government, which has prioritized the issue; that we not only have a political discourse but also a gender-responsive budget that brings this discourse to reality. And, of course, it hasn’t been achieved overnight. There is still a great demand for higher budgets, especially for the budget of the Ministry of Women, but citizens are already understanding that actions for women do not only depend on the budget of the Ministry of Women but also on the budgets of other ministries and institutions.
4 IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE OF THE REALITY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
The design of public policy interventions that produce tangible and lasting changes in societies is only possible if based on sound knowledge and reliable data. Unfortunately, the situation of women in the world and Latin America and the Caribbean are no exception - has remained until recently in an authentic “grey zone”, when not overtly invisible. In recent years, we have witnessed a progressive change in this area. As more women access management positions in social research institutes, public entities and academies, awareness of the need for information on the subject is increasing. Likewise, the knowledge generated strengthens the arguments of the social movements and political forces that drive the processes of change. Creating and disseminating knowledge is a central element of the synergy that leads to social change. UN Women attaches the utmost importance to the production of knowledge about the situation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean, as evidenced by numerous studies and research in which it has participated in recent years.

Between 2016 and 2018, the Regional Office generated more than 60 knowledge products in all the thematic areas of its mandate. It also carried out a mapping exercise of all knowledge products produced by the UN Women offices in Latin America and the Caribbean since 2015, in order to consolidate these products into relevant programmatic offers that generate transformative changes for women and girls in the region within the framework of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

This analysis and compilation of programmatic offers was carried out for the areas of: women’s political participation and governance systems, women’s economic empowerment, violence against women and girls, women’s rights, and women, peace and security and humanitarian action, areas in which there are more than 20 programmatic offers aligned with UN Women’s global strategic plan and the SDGs.

4.1. ADDRESSING KNOWLEDGE GAPS IN STRATEGIC AREAS

UN Women prioritizes the generation of knowledge to solve information gaps in areas of interest, for example, the lack of analysis on legislation related to femicide/feminicide in Latin America and the Caribbean. UN Women responded with the preparation of a regional study on the subject, entitled Analysis of Legislation on Femicide/Feminicide in Latin America and the Caribbean, carried out in association with the Follow-up Mechanism of the Convention of Belém do Pará (MESECVI). This publication was an essential input for the development of the Model Law on Femicide/Femicide, approved by the MESECVI in December 2018. In addition to the regional study, national diagnostics were developed. A notable example is the research entitled Femicide Violence in Mexico: Approaches and Trends 1985-2016, published in 2018 and co-sponsored by UN Women, INMUJERES and the Ministry of the Interior of that country, as input for the development of the Spotlight flagship programme of the United Nations and the European Union to end femicide/feminicide.
in the region. This global programme, led by UN Women together with UNFPA and UNDP, is being implemented in its first phase in five countries in the region (Argentina, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico), as well as at the regional level.

The study carried out in Mexico begins by recognizing the importance of the country’s Supreme Court ruling of March 25, 2015, which establishes that in the case of the death of a woman, the authorities are obliged to: identify the behaviours that caused their death, verify the presence or absence of gender motives or reasons that led to or explain the violent death, preserve specific evidence to determine if there was sexual violence and carry out the relevant expert reports to determine if the victim was immersed in a situation of violence. That is, this ruling paves the way for accurate registration and characterization of women victims of femicide/feminicide in Mexico. In addition to reviewing the incidence of female deaths with the presumption of homicide in the reference period, it disaggregates them by territory, not only at the level of the federated states but also at the municipal level. Other variables that the study analyses are the age of the women, their marital status and the cause of death. The study finds that a very high percentage (close to 90% of the alleged homicides of women) of the expert parties and reports did not include information in the section on family violence.

Finally, research serves as a key input for decision-making on this matter. In Mexico, part
of the difficulty lies in the coexistence of the Federal Criminal Code with state criminal codes, 13 of which do not have a figure for femicide. Therefore, the 2018 Report of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) recommends, among other things, to designate femicide/feminicide as a crime in all states of the nation.

4.2. ANSWERING THE CALL OF GOVERNMENTS AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

As early as 2008, the MESECVI recommended, in its first hemispheric report, to improve the statistical system in the countries of the region in order to obtain national information disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, rurality and urbanity, as well as to carry out studies on the magnitude of femicide disaggregated by ethnicity, region and geography and promote the creation of a record of information on this problem. Its recommendations included coordinating public entities that prepare and collect national data and women's institutes to improve statistical data on violence and gender; take into account the analysis performed by civil society organizations; include modules on violence against women in national censuses and surveys; socialize the results of statistical information and create websites with universal and free electronic access, among other recommendations.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there is a growing awareness of the importance of generating this data, and significant efforts have been made to remedy the deficiencies of most countries. UN Women has been an agent of this change, contributing in partnership with other UN Agencies, national institutions for the advancement of women, national statistical institutes and national women's rights movements. Here too we must repeat that the situation of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is disparate. In nations such as Jamaica, El Salvador and Colombia, for example, there were no surveys on the prevalence of gender-based violence until 2017. In many others, surveys have not been conducted, although the issue has been investigated through items or modules in non-specialized surveys. Mexico had already carried out its second such survey 10 years prior; Argentina conducted its first in 2016; Uruguay in 2013; and Ecuador in 2011.

At the request of the Government of Jamaica and within the framework of a work agreement with CARICOM, UN Women promoted the initiative that led to the implementation of this survey in Jamaica. The results revealed a prevalence of 27.8% of affected women, and that one in four women had experienced physical violence by their male partner, although abuse and violence in non-intimate contexts was also surveyed. The importance of the survey also derives from the fact that it has been culturally adapted to the CARICOM nations and that it explores the consequences of violence on women, their children and their families, as well as risk and protection factors and how affected women seek help, among other relevant issues.

Obtaining and managing quality data transcends the application of reliable surveys. In all countries of the region, there are offices or entities that collect information on violence against women (police stations, prosecutors, courts of justice, etc.). Unifying and consolidating data is a complex and vital task, one that has been carried out in recent years in Costa Rica, Jamaica and Mexico, through the
creation of unified data systems on violence against women, and to which UN Women has also contributed.

In Costa Rica, for example, the Unified System of Statistics on Gender-based violence (SUMEVIG) was established in 2008 through an Inter-institutional Letter of Understanding. It is currently composed of the Judiciary, the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC), the 9-1-1 emergency call system, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice and Peace, the Ombudsman and the National Institute for Women (INAMU). In 2017, at the request of the Government of Costa Rica, UN Women provided technical assistance to SUMEVIG for the completion of the gender-based violence indicators 2012-2016 of Costa Rica.

In Panama, a review of the gender-indicator system (SIEGPA), which was created in 2002 but needed updating, was carried out in 2018 jointly with INAMU and INEC. The review produced recommendations on the indicators, systematization, the legal framework and the Network of Public and Civil Entities Producing and Using Statistical Information to mainstream the gender approach in national statistics.
TABLE 3.2
Costa Rica:
Percentage distribution of police reports on domestic violence for cases associated with the Domestic Violence Law and the Violence Against Women Criminalization Law, according to reason for violation of the law, 2012 to 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence Law</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Aggression</td>
<td>56,6</td>
<td>55,4</td>
<td>56,3</td>
<td>56,3</td>
<td>52,6</td>
<td>61,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Aggression</td>
<td>37,6</td>
<td>37,0</td>
<td>36,6</td>
<td>36,6</td>
<td>34,3</td>
<td>31,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrimonial Aggression</td>
<td>5,5</td>
<td>4,9</td>
<td>5,9</td>
<td>5,9</td>
<td>6,7</td>
<td>6,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breach of protection measures</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>2,4</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>6,0</td>
<td>0,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>0,2</td>
<td>0,2</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breach of duties</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>0,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminalization of Violence Against Women Law</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Violence</td>
<td>49,8</td>
<td>59,9</td>
<td>51,0</td>
<td>51,0</td>
<td>52,0</td>
<td>53,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Violence</td>
<td>27,2</td>
<td>16,7</td>
<td>32,0</td>
<td>32,0</td>
<td>40,8</td>
<td>40,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breach of protection measures</td>
<td>17,6</td>
<td>19,1</td>
<td>12,6</td>
<td>12,6</td>
<td>2,9</td>
<td>1,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrimonial Violence</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>4,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breach of duties</td>
<td>1,2</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,1</td>
<td>0,1</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>0,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual violence</td>
<td>0,7</td>
<td>0,5</td>
<td>0,5</td>
<td>0,5</td>
<td>0,5</td>
<td>0,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


4.3. POSITIONING URGENT AGENDAS SUCH AS THE FEMINIST ECONOMY

The Progress of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean 2017: Transforming economies, realizing rights is a flagship research report developed by UN Women during this period. It was presented in the framework of the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61).

The report includes a strong call to transform the economies of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to realize women’s economic rights. To that end, it collects, systematizes and presents information on the barriers that women face in integrating themselves in the economy under fair and equitable conditions. For example, the responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work that falls disproportionately on women continues to be an important contribution to the regional economy. Women in the region spend up to three times more time on unpaid care and domestic work than men.
BOX 4
Sticky floors, glass ceilings and broken ladders

**GLASS CEILINGS**
- 19% of women have no income of their own
- 16% of women dedicate themselves exclusively to unpaid care and domestic work
- 33 hours is the time women spend on unpaid work per week
- 8% of women between 25 and 29 years are single mothers
- 6% of women are mothers by the age of 19 years

**BROKEN LADDERS**
- 31% of women have no income of their own
- 29% of women dedicate themselves exclusively to unpaid care and domestic work
- 41 hours is the time women spend on unpaid work per week
- 15% of women between 25 and 29 years are single mothers
- 30% of women are mothers by the age of 19 years

**STICKY FLOORS**
- 43% of women have no income of their own
- 41% of women dedicate themselves exclusively to unpaid care and domestic work
- 46 hours is the time women spend on unpaid work per week
- 17% of women between 25 and 29 years are single mothers
- 59% of women are mothers by the age of 19 years

Source: Progress of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean 2017. Transforming economies, realizing rights, UN Women.
Another disturbing finding is that, despite the reduction of poverty in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and the contribution of women’s participation in the labour sector to this reduction, the feminization of poverty has become more acute over the last decade. Although general poverty fell by almost 16 percentage points between 2002 and 2014, the index of women in situations of poverty increased by 11%.

The report identifies three different realities defined by structural factors that interact with gender, such as income levels, educational levels, age at first pregnancy, ethnicity and race. At the first extreme are women in “sticky floors”: women with a low level of education and family income. Their labour participation is limited and significantly less than that of men. At the other extreme are women with tertiary education and high family income, but who find themselves in so-called “glass ceilings” that limit their growth and access to decision-making positions. Although this group is on a more positive trajectory than the other two, the women in this group also experience discrimination and occupational segregation in their work environments that manifest themselves in the wage gap, which also affects women in the other groups, as well as a disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work in comparison to men.

Between the two extremes are the so-called “broken ladders”, which include women with secondary education and intermediate family income. Although they are inserted in the labour market, women in this group lack social protection nets that allow them to move significantly towards economic empowerment or that help them prevent a fall into the “sticky floor” scenario.

But, beyond the diagnostic, the report identifies six strategies to address the challenges of the region and prevent setbacks, overcome barriers and advance women’s economic empowerment: a) recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work; b) Establish universal and gender-responsive social protection systems; c) create more and better jobs and transform labour markets for women’s rights; d) Promote egalitarian family relationships that recognize the diversity of households and the rights and obligations of their members; e) create the conditions for women to fully enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights; and f) contain the adverse effects of the economic slowdown on gender equality.

The regional report also generated national replicas, with a national report on the progress of women in Colombia in 2018 and another in Argentina that will be presented in 2019 by the Government of the City of Buenos Aires.

Over the last 20 years, the region of Latin America and the Caribbean has made considerable progress towards women’s empowerment through critical social innovations. The achievements have been remarkable in areas such as access to own income, employment and social protection. However, as stated earlier, women in the region still devote more than three times the time to unpaid care and domestic work than men, a disproportion that represents a barrier to both economic empowerment and the enjoyment of their rights under equal conditions.

Therefore, recognizing unpaid work as a fundamental economic contribution and care as a basic human right has become crucial to the new development model. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the
importance of facing this challenge in its target 5.4 which states the need to: “Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility in the household and family as nationally appropriate.” As part of its regional strategy, UN Women has endeavoured to prioritize care policies in government agendas. To this end, it published the regional study Recognize, Redistribute and Reduce Care Work: Inspiring practices in Latin America and the Caribbean. The study was prepared as an essential input for the Policy Dialogue on Women’s Economic Empowerment: Recognition, redistribution and reduction of unpaid care and domestic work in Latin America and the Caribbean that UN Women, the Organization for the Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Government of Uruguay organized in Montevideo in November 2018. With this document, UN Women intends to provide inspiring experiences in the region that exemplify where care policies may be and should be advanced. Among other results, the contents of this study also served to feed the discussions of the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63), held in March 2019. At the country level, UN Women developed several studies related to the theme in Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay.

Social security is a human right recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), in its articles 22 and 25.1, and is promoted through different legal instruments and international agreements, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and CEDAW. Social protection systems that include a gender approach contribute to reducing the gaps in poverty rates between men and women and improve women’s income security and access to their own income, in addition to providing a minimum level of assistance for poor women, particularly single mothers or heads of household. However, the current regional context, marked by economic stagnation and fiscal adjustments, imposes significant limitations on the investment required to implement these types of policies.

In this context, UN Women has produced public policy studies and recommendations aimed at decision-makers in governments and parliaments, as in the case of the UN Women Multi-country Office in the Caribbean, in the framework of the implementation of a joint programme with UNICEF. Also of note is the joint work of UN Women with the ILO and UNDP in the Dominican Republic, where the three agencies provided advice in the preparation of the study Towards a Social Protection Floor and Gender Equality in the Dominican Republic: Scenarios and costs, which was presented by the Vice President of the Dominican Republic, Ms. Margarita Cedeño, in the framework of the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) at the United Nations headquarters in New York, at the side event “Social Protection for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Proposals towards adequate financing”.

UN Women also advises, supports and, in some cases, leads the development of time-use surveys, and provides technical assistance for the analysis and presentation of data. For example, in 2017, UN Women coordinated the publication and launch of the first time-use survey in Paraguay, together with the Ministry of Women and the General Directorate of Statistics and Census.
4.4. GENERATING KNOWLEDGE FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES

In its role as Secretariat of the regional process of preparation for the CSW, UN Women has generated knowledge with reference documents for each meeting since 2016. In addition to these documents, it has produced a series of normative studies on the CEDAW recommendations relevant to the issues analysed by the CSW: women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work at CSW61, rural women and girls at CSW62, and social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure at CSW63. These studies include *Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls*, a study that compiles CEDAW recommendations for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on rural women and girls, and the study *Participation and Access of Women to the Media and Information and Communication Technologies*, as well as their impact and use as instruments for women’s advancement and empowerment, both developed as input to the discussions of the CSW62.

The previous regional consultations held in Panama (CSW61), Santo Domingo (CSW62) and Buenos Aires (CSW63), made it possible to consolidate the discourse and strategy of the region in the face of the global debate. All three sessions incorporated representatives from civil society, providing them with the opportunity to attend and conduct meetings and deliberations with the ministers participating in each consultation, and present their demands and priorities, as well as the perspective of indigenous, young and Afro-descendent women.

UN Women works closely with ECLAC in preparation for the Regional Conference on Women, which is held every three years. In 2016, UN Women presented a first draft of the *Progress of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*, as an essential input for discussions on women’s economic autonomy during the meeting. The next Conference will take place in November 2019 in Santiago de Chile.

In line with the production and dissemination of knowledge about efforts for gender equality and women’s empowerment in the region referred to in this document, it is also worth mentioning a study carried out by the UN Women Regional Office of the Americas and the Caribbean in 2016, which examines the MAMs of the Executive Power of the 19 countries of Latin America and the Hispanic Caribbean (part one), as well as the entities dedicated to promoting gender equality in regional/sub-regional integration systems to which these countries belong (part two): the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the OAS; the COMMCA of the Central American Integration System (SICA); the Andean Advisory Council of High-Level Authorities on Women and Equal Opportunities (CAAAMI) of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) and the Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities for Women (RMAAM) of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR).

The study provides an overview of trends related to the origin, evolution and trajectory of institutional entities, their current status, their mandates and functions, their capacity and resources, their relations with civil society, the procedures for inter-ministerial coordination, the existence of national laws, policies and national plans for gender
equality, the procedures for the follow-up of said public policy instruments, among other issues, and delves into common challenges and concerns of interest for reflection and concrete recommendations.

Together, the above-mentioned studies provide an overview of the main resources of public institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean in this area. But institutionality is just one of the dimensions of the reality of women. It is also necessary to deepen the knowledge of the other dimensions. And this is also part of UN Women’s work.

4.5. RAISING AWARENESS OF THE DIFFERENCES AMONG WOMEN

Although women share the common disadvantages in comparison to men in almost all areas - not just economic - their situation also varies greatly depending on ethnicity. Therefore, it is appropriate to highlight another illustrative example of knowledge management efforts in recent years: the electronic portal Portrait of Inequalities of Gender and Race, which displays data and indicators differentiated by gender and race for Brazil.

Published and updated periodically by UN Women, the Federal Government of Brazil, the Secretariat of Policies for Women and the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), the portal provides disaggregated data from the last two decades (1995-2015) on population, heads of household, education, health, access to social security and benefits, labour market participation, job performance in domestic services, housing and health, access to durable goods and digital services, poverty, distribution and inequality of income, time use and victimization.
It is not possible to end this section without at least mentioning the recent creation in 2017 of the UN Women Chair for Latin America and the Caribbean at the University of Salamanca, Spain. Without a doubt, spaces like this contribute to generating and disseminating specific knowledge about women’s political participation and parity democracy in the region, with the transformative effect mentioned at the beginning of this section. The same can be said of the CEEG, inaugurated in September 2018 and the result of a collaborative effort between UN Women and the Government of Mexico, through INEGI. The Centre’s mission is to support the statistical systems of different countries to improve the analysis and use of statistics with a gender perspective so that they can be compared internationally.
**MABEL BIANCO**  
Foundation for Studies and Research on Women. Argentina

Mabel Bianco is the president of the Foundation for Studies and Research on Women (FEIM), an NGO based in Argentina and with consultative status before the United Nations that “develops research, advocacy, training and promotes equality and rights of women, girls and teenagers in Argentina and Latin America and the Caribbean”.

Bianco holds a medical degree from the University of El Salvador (Buenos Aires, Argentina), a master’s degree in Public Health from the University of El Valle (Cali, Colombia) and a degree in specialized studies in Epidemiology and Medical Statistics from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (United Kingdom). She is the coordinator for the international campaign “Women Won’t Wait - End HIV and Violence Against Women NOW!” And the International AIDS Women’s Caucus (IAWC). She lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

1. We would like you to share a brief assessment of the current situation for the promotion and advancement of women’s rights and gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean. Where are we, and what is being done right now?

We need to strengthen the defence of women’s rights and the advances made in the countries. The fight of religious and fundamentalist groups against the so-called “gender ideology” forces us to defend the gender perspective, universally accepted as the basis for the elimination of gender stereotypes that lead to multiple forms of discrimination for women and girls in the region.

2. Statistics and data can serve to both make visible as well as hide realities. In recent years, some countries in the region have made significant progress in registering disaggregated data that help to raise awareness of the situation of women. Could you address this, please?

The registration of statistical data disaggregated by sex is an advance that makes it possible to evaluate better. However, we would now need data disaggregated by gender and sexual orientation. This is the step that we have not yet taken in the region. Among the significant statistical challenges we still have, is the data on femicides, a term that is NOT recognized in all countries. We hope that the Spotlight project will improve the registration of this data in the region.

3. A G20 Summit was held in Buenos Aires for the first time in Latin America in 2018. How were the issues of women’s rights and gender equality positioned at that meeting?

We were able to participate in both the W20 and the G20 and managed to prioritize aspects of gender mainstreaming. Above all, we insisted on the need to incorporate paternity leave, as well as other ways of promoting the equal distribution of unpaid
care tasks. We also reinforced the need for education that focuses on girls, especially at the primary level in mathematics and technology (STEM); as well as the development of a solid infrastructure for women, such as the construction of primary schools where children have access to an extended day that allows mothers to work. It is also necessary to improve public transport for the safe and accessible movement of children and women, not only in private but also public transportation, among other issues.

4. We are seeing a generational change in the feminist movement in the region, with young people taking on an even stronger role in the demands for gender equality. We would like to hear your perspective on these changes and how you see that they can influence the implementation of the SDGs.

In Argentina, the region and the world, girls and teenagers, as well as boys, have recovered the term feminist as a position adopted by people of all genders, but which now promotes equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and inequality. This is a breakthrough because teenagers rescued and simplified the explanation of what feminism is and helped eliminate false ideas that feminists are weird, lesbian women who want to eradicate men. In Argentina, this was reflected in the discussion about abortion, and the movement spread throughout Latin America.

5. To conclude, we would be grateful if you would address the role played by UN Women in promoting women’s rights and advancing gender equality in the region.

In the region, the work of UN Women has represented a significant advance for the promotion of women’s rights. The visits of the Executive Director and Regional Director of UN Women to the countries of the region provided increasingly clear testimonies of women’s rights and how they are deployed in all fields - economic, social, political, family, sports. The studies they promoted and the statements they issued have been of great benefit in the countries of the region. It is interesting to witness how UN Women’s approach improved, because in the beginning it did not address issues such as abortion, and now it has a clear voice in defending the right to elective, safe, voluntary and enjoyable motherhood. I think there is still a long way to go, but a partnership was developed between the region’s feminist movement and UN Women that allows us to advance in defence of women’s rights.
PROMOTING THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
If Latin America and the Caribbean is in itself the most violent region on the planet,\textsuperscript{12} women and girls are affected differently and disproportionately by this reality, both in the private and public spheres. In all the countries of the region with demographic and health or reproductive health surveys, it is evident that domestic violence against women is widespread: between one quarter and half of the women reported experiencing violence by their partner. In Central America, the numbers are even more dramatic, with two out of three women killed because of their sex. As almost everywhere in the world, home is not a safe place for many women in Latin America and the Caribbean, but violence also occurs in their communities, in public transport, on the streets, in the workplace and in educational spaces. Many cases of violence against women and girls are not reported, and when they are, many of the crimes are not investigated or, if they are, proper protocols are not followed.

The figures available on the phenomenon of femicide/femicide, the most extreme manifestation of violence against women, reveal an alarming reality. Among the 25 countries with the highest femicide rates in the world, 14 are in Latin America and the Caribbean, with 12 women killed every day.\textsuperscript{13}

According to data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), there were 1,829 femicides/feminicides in the region in 2016, not including figures for Mexico and Brazil where comparable data was unfortunately not available, and which registered 2,813 and 4,621 alleged murders of women, respectively. In addition, it can be assumed that femicide/femicide is significantly underreported in many countries, not to mention that it sometimes overlaps and is confused with missing women cases (3,174 disappeared in Mexico in 2017 alone). Equally disturbing is the concentration of violence in some groups of women. For example, in Brazil, while murders of white women decreased in the last 10 years, the murder rate of black women increased by 15.4\% according to the 2018 Atlas of Violence. Likewise, indigenous women are significantly more likely to be victims of rape and domestic violence than non-indigenous women.\textsuperscript{14}

Another form of deeply rooted gender-based violence in the region is child marriage and early unions. Almost one in four girls in Latin America and the Caribbean marry before age 18, despite contravening legal provisions on the age of marriage in some countries. Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region in the world where, in the last 30 years, there has been no significant decrease in child marriage. UNICEF also notes that Latin America and the Caribbean continues to be challenged by high levels of early sexual initiation of girls, and links it to sexual violence in their domestic environment, transgenerational relationships between girls and older men and an alarming level of teenage pregnancy (64 per 1,000 pregnancies), the region with the second-highest incidence in the world, after Africa.

As we will see later, the elimination of violence against women, to which UN Women devotes
a good part of its resources and energy in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the rest of the world, takes different forms, is subject to various strategies and implies very diverse actions, all with a view to realizing the human right of women to a life free of violence.

5.1. REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS TO ELIMINATE ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

UN Women works to promote regulatory frameworks that comply with international standards for the prevention, investigation and punishment of all forms of violence against women. To that end, it develops a great diversity of actions, activities and projects that involve multiple actors and allies.

Thus, for example, Uruguay, with UN Women’s technical assistance, approved the Comprehensive Law to guarantee women a life free of violence in 2017. In Ecuador, the Women’s Parliamentary Group and the presidency of the Legislative Assembly presented a bill for the eradication of violence against women that, together with the bill presented by the Executive, was approved in 2017. In Paraguay, the legislative advocacy work in which UN Women participates also bore fruit in 2017 when all articles of the Law of Integral Protection of Women against all forms of violence, including femicide, entered into force.

With the approval of the new law, Paraguay became the eighteenth country in Latin America and the Caribbean to criminalize the gender-
related killing of women. In addition to femicide, the new law recognizes obstetric violence (violence perpetrated against pregnant women or during childbirth) as a crime and prohibits online abuse against women and girls. It also provides comprehensive measures, such as free legal assistance and access to shelter and training for survivors, and requires a unified, standardized system to collect data on gender-based violence.

UN Women supports the countries of the region to adopt the Model Latin American Protocol for the investigation of gender-related killings of women (femicide/feminicide) developed by UN Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the creation of tools adapted to the context of each country to properly investigate and punish all forms of violence against women, including femicide. Brazil was the first country to change the Protocol, which led to the approval of a landmark law on femicide in March 2015.

In 2018, UN Women supported the adaptation of the Protocol in Argentina and Guatemala, a process that will be extended to many countries in the region in 2019 with support from UN Women, including the United Nations and European Union Spotlight initiative.

In collaboration with the MESECVI/OAS, UN Women developed the Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of the Gender-Related Killing of Women and Girls (Femicide/Feminicide) that is aligned with international human rights conventions and instruments. The document seeks to create or update legislation in the region, as well as strengthen comprehensive prevention, protection, care, investigation, persecution, sanction and reparation actions to guarantee the right of all women and girls to a life free of violence, as established by the Belém do Pará Convention, an international instrument signed and ratified by 32 States in the region. The process culminated in March 2019 with the formal presentation of the Model Law. During the course of its review over the last decade, the number of Latin American countries with specialized legislation on femicide has doubled, from nine to 18.

In 2017, UN Women launched the Gender Protocol for Barbados, which provides a checklist for the Barbados Judiciary to increase its sensitivity to gender issues and addresses “unequal gender relations”.

Towards the end of 2018, the European Union and the United Nations launched the global Spotlight Initiative, with UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA as the leading implementing agencies. As the name suggests, one of the central objectives is to focus attention on the violence against women, and its true extent, which remain obscured in many countries. In Latin America, the initiative focuses on the elimination of the most extreme manifestation of violence, femicide, and will be implemented in five countries: Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, as well as at the regional level.

UN Women has also focused on the prevention and reporting of violence against women in public spaces and in transport systems, through joint initiatives and the Safe Cities programme, with local governments and communication campaigns that are detailed in other sections of this report.

In summary, between 2016 and 2018, three countries - Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay -
passed comprehensive legislation on violence against women; nine of the 32 states of the Mexican Federation included specific provisions against political violence against women in their constitutions, electoral legislation or other state laws; three countries - Trinidad and Tobago, El Salvador and Guatemala - , as well as 31 states in Mexico, passed legislation to increase the legal age of marriage of women to 18 years without exceptions; Uruguay and Honduras passed specific legislation against femicide; while in 2016 Bolivia became the first country in the region to pass legislation against harassment and political violence against women. Similar initiatives are currently under discussion in Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru.

All of a sudden, the information screens on the subway station platforms turn to show an image of the back of a passenger waiting for the arrival of the next train. It is an abusive, casual shot that shows a close up of the man’s buttocks. Other passengers at the station soon identify the owner of the buttocks on the monitor. Two women smile. Some men frown, confused, without understanding what it is. Perhaps the last to notice what is happening is the owner of the exposed buttocks. When he finally becomes aware of it, he turns bewildered, looks around. Who is playing a joke on me?

But it's not a joke. This is one of the messages of the communication campaign with the hashtag #NoEsDeHombres, which was developed by the advertising agency J. Walter Thompson and UN Women in 2017 for the Mexico City Metro, with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) to raise
awareness among men about the sexual violence that women experience in public transport and spaces. In Mexico, according to recent data, nine out of 10 women have experienced some type of sexual violence on a daily basis.

The campaign, a daring social communication experiment, widely fulfilled its objectives. According to the subsequent impact assessment, 38% of the men said that the campaign increased their awareness and made them reflect on the violence and sexual harassment experienced by women in public transport; 39% said the campaign motivated them to act against sexual violence and 29% said that it also prompted them to avoid these practices. The evidence also suggests that 11% of men exposed to the campaign changed their belief that compliments please women, and 6% changed their perception that a woman’s dress provokes sexual violence. On the other hand, 28% of the women declared that the campaign provided essential information about their rights, where to go and what to do in case of violence or abuse.

The campaign received several important advertising and social communication campaign awards including “Planet 50-50” from UN Women for Inclusive Collaboration in 2018. It also won the Sol de Bronce Award at the Ibero-American advertising communication festival “El Ojo de Ibero-America” in 2017.
5.2. WORK WITH PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

In another section, we refer to the support that UN Women provides in the collection, systematization and dissemination of statistical information on violence in the region, and the importance of this work for the design of public policies that contribute to combat this serious public health issue. We have also referred to the contributions towards the creation of regulatory frameworks in line with international standards that is being carried out in this same field.

But the work of UN Women in the prevention, punishment and reparation of violence against women also includes various State structures, including police forces, municipal authorities and national women’s mechanisms.

Thus, for example, in El Salvador and Honduras, new units or particular jurisdictions were created to address cases of violence against women. In El Salvador, specialized jurisdictions were established in 2016 in the departments of San Salvador, Santa Ana and San Miguel. The initiative includes the creation of a second instance chamber with national jurisdiction in San Salvador, the capital, and the creation of four multidisciplinary support teams with highly qualified professionals in psychology, social work and education. UN Women has been actively involved in the implementation of these jurisdictions.

This same year (2016), a specialized unit was created in Honduras to investigate femicides and violent deaths of women. The unit acts under the Technical Criminal Investigation Agency (ATIC) and must report to the Legislative Commission for Gender Equality, as well as to the Inter-Institutional Commission for Follow-up of Investigations of Violent Deaths of Women and Femicides about their findings and advances in this matter.

Also, in El Salvador, UN Women has accompanied and advised the National Civil Police to improve their responses in cases of violence against women. As part of this process, a satisfaction survey was applied with 83 users of the 30 UNIMUJER/ODAC (specialized units of the National Police for the care of women victims of violence) in 2018. A curriculum was also created to standardize training on attention to violence in the police academy, and a team of 30 new officers from the UNIMUJER/ODAC Department was formed. A no less remarkable aspect of this work is the development of a protocol to address gender discrimination within the National Civil Police. This technical assistance process has been possible thanks to the contribution of the Basque Country Cooperation. Also in El Salvador, UN Women assisted in the creation of new municipal offices specializing in violence against women in the cities of Zaragoza and Santa Ana, with the significant participation of local women’s organizations.

The joint work of UN Women and national women’s mechanisms generally include the prevention of violence and the protection of women and girls, since this is an unavoidable component in the design of national plans and policies to which UN Women usually contributes. This collaboration will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

In Haiti, UN Women is working to improve the conditions of women in prison through different actions. More than 200 officials of the criminal and judicial system have been trained on issues related to gender, human rights, CEDAW and the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, the Bangkok Rules, among others. In addition,
the criminal system now has a gender-sensitive protocol that covers both detainees and prison officers.

Likewise, in association with the Haitian Human Rights Office (BDHH), UN Women has provided legal assistance to more than 350 women victims of gender-based violence since 2016, in some cases related to their sexual orientation. Since 2017, legal advice has also been provided to women deprived of liberty in pre-trial detention. Some have been held for 10 years in this situation, and others have not even been informed of the charges they face.

In summary, in its mandate to support women in situations of violence in Latin America and the Caribbean, UN Women also works with police and judicial services to address violence at the national, state (in the case of federal states) and local levels to improve protocols for denouncing, investigating and prosecuting acts of violence against women, including femicide/feminicide.

5.3. OTHER FACES OF VIOLENCE
The promotion of adequate legal frameworks that protect girls from child marriage and early unions, in line with international standards, is one of the objectives of the “Joint Inter-Agency Programme to End Child Marriage and Early Unions in Latin America and the Caribbean: 2018-2021”, launched by UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women in October 2017 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

This joint programme seeks to break the silence that persists in the region about child marriage and early unions and accelerate efforts to prevent and end these harmful practices, as well as their causes and consequences, in five countries of the region: Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

As part of this United Nations initiative, led by UNICEF, UNFPA, and UN Women, child marriage has been banned in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Trinidad and Tobago in the last two years, as well as in 31 of the 32 Mexican states.

Among the many forms of violence that women experience because they are women, we must include those in the political sphere. The increase in women’s participation in political spaces witnessed over the last decades has made visible a reality that continues to hinder the achievement of substantive equality, the violence experienced by women as candidates, as elected women and as voters. That is, although they have become politically empowered and gained guarantees for the effective fulfillment of their political rights, women have also been infringed upon and exposed to a reality of violence that has a clear gender bias. Based on the recommendations of the United Nations Special Rapporteur, Ms. Dubravka Šimonović, to address this type of violence, UN Women is working with key actors at the national and regional levels to raise awareness about this phenomenon and develop legal tools to prevent, sanction and end violence against women in political life, in line with the Model Law of the CIM/MESECVI.

Notwithstanding, efforts to protect women and ensure their safety are not limited to the improvement of national regulatory frameworks and care protocols. They include, as we shall see, the strengthening of the institutional mechanisms responsible for combating the problem.
5.4. PROTECT ALL, PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE

Together with the measures to promote or improve regulatory frameworks and care for women victims of violence, UN Women promotes and collaborates with other projects that also support women in more specific situations or contexts.

In this regard and particularly relevant is the joint work with the Centre for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) to draft an international protocol for the active investigation of threats against human rights defenders, journalists, justice workers and others linked to the public interest. Landmark cases with significant international media impact such as those of Marielle Franco in Brazil and Berta Cáceres in Honduras are, unfortunately, only the visible tip of the iceberg in a region where threats, attacks and deaths of journalists and defenders of human rights are daily occurrences, and where the vast majority of these crimes remain unpunished. The project is being prioritized under the inspiring title of “Protocolo de la Esperanza” (Protocol of Hope). In Colombia, UN Women has supported an initiative with similar objectives to strengthen the protection mechanisms for women defenders of human rights.

In Brazil, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on February 1, 2016, in response to the Zika virus and established its association with microcephaly and other congenital malformations. The UN Women Regional Office, together with UN Women Brazil, in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and UNFPA, promoted innovative initiatives to address the outbreak of the virus, as well as its impacts on the lives and rights of women.

Activities included the creation of the Situation Room for the defence of women’s human, sexual and reproductive rights in response to the Zika virus epidemic; the coordination of
a communication campaign focused on the needs of women, in partnership with UNFPA, PAHO/WHO and the Secretariat of Policies for Women; the design and implementation of the communication strategy “More Rights, Less Zika” for the prevention and promotion of women’s rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, in the context of the Zika virus; supporting the development of a virtual platform for communication products; and conducting workshops with journalists and social communicators to improve the dissemination of messages and language regarding the epidemic, taking into account the voices of women. The development and success of these activities supported its replication in other countries affected by the epidemic including Jamaica and Honduras.

Along the same lines, but on a longer-term horizon, UN Women has also been working with people living with HIV/AIDS. In this case, the objective was to ensure that HIV/AIDS care and response policies were formulated from a differentiated and gender perspective. In several countries, including Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Uruguay, with funds from UNAIDS, UN Women worked directly with grassroots organizations, empowering women on issues related to the causes of the epidemic (gender-based violence, lack of information, discrimination in health services, among others), to reduce the stigma faced by women living with HIV and ensure comprehensive access to treatment. There remains much work to be done in this field, especially in terms of public policies.

UN Women has also taken or supported specific measures to protect women and girls in response to migratory flows, both in the Northern Triangle of Central America and those produced by the Venezuelan situation. In the case of migrant caravans from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, UN Women provided technical advice and financial resources to strengthen the efforts of the United Nations in emergency situations. The objective was to help ensure that both the United Nations response and the national institutions incorporated the gender perspective. This included the design of a “protection kit for migrant women”, together with women’s organizations, which was massively distributed among women and girls along the caravan.

In response to mixed flows from Venezuela, the UN Women Regional Office, as well as the country offices of Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador, and the Caribbean Multi-Country Office, are involved with the response, placing particular emphasis on the needs of women and girl migrants. As a result of these efforts, US$ 3.4 million was mobilized to support UN Women’s response to the crisis. In this context, the vulnerability of women and girls to gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and trafficking are some of the most challenging aspects. Similarly, it is important to facilitate the exercise of their rights through empowerment actions and the promotion of their participation in spaces for dialogue and negotiation.

UN Women’s efforts range from training state agents and host communities for the protection of the rights of Venezuelan women and girls and the prevention of gender-based violence to the mobilization of specialized teams for psychosocial support; from emergency intervention through monetary contributions to women at risk of survival sex work to the search for employment opportunities and support for building a sustainable economic life for women. The interventions vary from country to country, depending on the particular circumstances of
each case, the availability of resources and the alliances established.

UN Women, through its Regional Office, has been one of the most significant contributors to the work of the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform to guide the response to the mixed flows of migrants and refugees from Venezuela, coordinated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as requested by the Secretary-General in September 2018. UN Women also actively participated in the development of the Regional Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) for refugees and migrants from Venezuela, presented in Geneva at the end of December 2018. The proposals submitted by UN Women cover a wide range of areas focused on gender equality and women’s empowerment as the main axes.

According to the UNDP and UN Environment Poverty and Environment Initiative, vulnerability to disasters is significant in the Latin American and Caribbean region and reflects the linkages between poverty and the environment.

It is estimated that about 8.4 million people in the region live in the immediate vicinity of a hurricane path, and 29 million live in low elevation areas, which are vulnerable to flooding.¹⁵ Women have less access to resources and tend to live in high-risk areas, and are therefore more exposed to the effects of disasters.

In these cases, UN Women’s main objective is to introduce the gender perspective in the emergency response of institutions, since women, the elderly and girls are at higher risk of death.

The passage of Hurricane Matthew through Haiti in October 2016 affected about 2.1 million people and left the country in a situation of humanitarian emergency. UN Women, with the support of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Humanitarian Coordinator, positioned the equal participation of women in decision-making spaces, protection and decent access to humanitarian assistance as one of the strategic objectives defined in the United Nations flash appeal in response to the emergency situation.

Successive hurricanes that occurred between September and November 2017 devastated several Caribbean islands, including Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Dominica, the British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos, Saint Martin and St. Bartholomew. UN Women actively participated in the emergency response through the Caribbean Multi-Country Office based in Barbados, with the support of the Regional Office. In Antigua and Barbuda, where all the inhabitants were forced to leave the island, UN Women was present from the outset of the response.

On all the islands, UN Women worked closely with the gender mechanisms directly involved in response to strengthen their capacity in the context of the emergency.

Getting Women Farmers Back on Their Feet in Dominica

Six months after the Category 5 hurricane battered this small island nation in 2017, the UN Women assessment showed that what women wanted was assistance to get back on their feet and return to work, and not just financial aid.

“We lost our livelihoods! The income from the farm is how women feed their families and send our children to school. A lot of people had to start all over. I had to start all over,” said Jennifer Pascal, Vice President of the Northeast Agricultural Women’s Movement.

In September 2017, Category 5 Hurricane Maria tore through the island nation of Dominica, leaving extensive damage in its wake. UN Women Programme Specialist Isiuwa Iyahen visited the island shortly after to assess the impact of the hurricane on smallholder farmers in the western and southern districts of the island.

“The damage to these women’s farms was catastrophic with 76 per cent of them...
reporting major losses, with crops wiped out and equipment, tools and infrastructure destroyed,” said Iyahen.

“The truth is that we couldn’t prepare. We couldn’t protect our crops ... We couldn’t protect the things inside our home, much less outside. I remember being told that we would be directly hit by the hurricane, yes, but it made landfall three hours ahead of schedule. Everything happened and developed so fast,” said a member of the Morne Prosper Women’s Group, a cooperative of women farmers.

The post-disaster needs assessment in the country highlighted that the agricultural sector in Dominica is largely composed of small family farms and subsistence production from small land known locally as “kitchen gardens”. More than half (57 per cent) of farmers interviewed owned farms of five acres or less, while 22 per cent were farming plots between five and 10 acres. Agriculture is also the second most important activity (after the service sector) in the country, employing 17 per cent of the population (11 900 inhabitants).

After the hurricane, some women could not return to their farms immediately because of the damage their homes had suffered.

“The women had to choose between the farm and the family home. Some women (after
five months) have begun to return to the farms little by little,” Pascal said, adding: “My greenhouses are still devastated, and I don’t know if I can build new ones or make what I have stand again. It has become very costly in terms of hours worked, and because the money is not coming in... We are unable to pay the workers, and this has limited what I can do.”

The main crop from her two-acre farm was seasoning peppers, but now there is nothing left. “I had just started to plant onion seedlings in October, and I couldn’t find any of them. Most of the fruit trees have been destroyed... The farm shed also disappeared, and the water storage tanks fell,” she elaborated.

“I had irrigation pipes... Half of them went downstream since my land is on the riverbank. Some broke, others were torn, so I will need time to recover everything,” she continued. Only the avocado trees on Pascal’s land have survived total destruction and have started to bloom.

Many women farmers in the country were already at a disadvantage in the agricultural sector since the prices for their crops were set by the traders. Just before Hurricane Maria struck, UN Women was about to start providing support to the north-east women’s farmer groups Dominica to strengthen their pricing and contract negotiation skills. The project also aimed to help women farmers identify the potential to add value
to their products and create new market opportunities, for example, by linking them to the ecotourism sector.

Today, the need for support is greater than ever, especially for women farmers who bear the brunt of the disaster and are on the frontlines of managing their effects. “As smallholder farmers, women’s vulnerabilities to climate change are especially high,” said UN Women’s Iyahen. “The prevalent gender inequalities and multiple vulnerabilities translate into a compromised capacity to cope with adversities.”

This situation was clearly reflected in the evaluation carried out by UN Women. What women in Dominica want is assistance to get back on their feet and return to work, not just financial aid. Seeds, equipment and access to financial aid are the immediate needs.

“What we want are fast-growing seeds to get back on our feet sooner instead of those that produce longer-term harvests, such as tomatoes, peas, carrots, cabbage and lettuce. [With these], we could have a harvest six weeks after planting,” explained Jennifer
Pascal. The women of the North-east Women’s Farmers Group added that help from the Ministry of Agriculture is vital to recovering high-value crops such as cocoa, avocado, mango and other citrus fruits.

After Hurricane Maria, UN Women helps farmer groups in getting labour and equipment to make their land productive again. The post-disaster needs assessment conducted by UN Women will not only inform its own programme but will also help other development actors, such as the World Bank and the national government, in their efforts to rebuild Dominica.

“We don’t lose hope, women are optimistic,” Pascal concluded with a smile.


In Ecuador, the UN Women office played a leading role in the emergency response to the strong earthquake in January 2016, co-leading the gender-based violence subgroup in the Protection Cluster with UNFPA. The subgroup coordinated multiple organizations and government actors, communities and people affected by the earthquake. Actions included ensuring the privacy and security of girls and women in temporary shelters and the adaptation of protocols and roadmaps for addressing violence against women and girls in emergency situations, among others. The UN Women office, together with various ministries, made high-level visits to the affected areas, resulting in improvements to the conditions of girls and women within the shelters.

The earthquake negatively affected fishing, tourism, commerce and small-scale production activities that provided the primary source of income for many women. In response to this situation, UN Women, in collaboration with UNDP, developed an early recovery scheme for affected areas, combining training courses with “cash-for-work” mechanisms, involving women in the building reconstruction and debris processing, while promoting ventures and stimulating production.

The following year, in 2017, a 7.1 magnitude earthquake occurred in Mexico City, followed by several aftershocks, killing over 330 people, most of whom were women. In this context, UN Women joined the work of the national United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETE) to accompany the response of the Mexican Government.

UN Women focused on promoting the mainstreaming of a gender approach in contingency and emergency response plans, as well as the collection of information disaggregated by sex. Activities included the development of the guideline document *Comprehensive humanitarian response with a gender equality approach: Women’s leadership and participation are key to reconstruction*, with concrete recommendations by sector to include a gender perspective in the various work areas in emergency contexts. The document served as the basis for dialogues with civil society, the
UN Women also led efforts to mainstream the gender perspective in the humanitarian response to the eruptions of the Fuego volcano in Guatemala in June 2018. It partnered and consulted with several women’s organizations to design an emergency kit for women, an initiative led by the Association of Widows of Public Transport Pilots (AVITRANSP), a partner organization that demands justice and provides support for widows of public service drivers who are victims of post-conflict violence. AVITRANSP produced an innovative “UN Women Cloak” with independent pockets to safeguard identification documents and other belongings. In all cases, the distribution of kits should be viewed as a space for exchange and empowerment, where women, in addition to accessing a useful and essential item, can strengthen their capacities and develop alliances with other women in similar situations.

However, the work of UN Women goes beyond the purely reactive response in emergency situations. It also promotes the introduction of a gender perspective in climate change adaptation and mitigation measures that are discussed and adopted at the regional level.

Thus, in Ecuador for example, UN Women supported women from the rural communities of Bayan, Puculcay, Morasloma and Hornillos in the province of Azuay to design Community Plans for Sustainable Development that integrate issues such as the sexual division of labour, care work, the elimination of violence against women and girls, with agro-ecological and traditional practices such as seedbed conservation, pesticide-free agriculture, organic fertilizers, soil protection and solid waste management, watershed protection and ecology of the area. Thanks to their strengthened capacities, three of these women are currently members of the Cantonal Environmental Council, and two others are running as candidates in local elections.

5.5. FROM PROTECTION TO PREVENTION

The next step after the creation and strengthening of legal and institutional mechanisms for the protection of women is preventive work, which relies on information and education for cultural change. UN Women has made considerable efforts towards this end in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Work has been developed on various fronts through media and information campaigns, educational campaigns in primary and secondary schools to impact the youth population, and advocacy in strategic sectors such as advertising agencies and the media, to name a few.

Another strategic area addressed by UN Women is support for the creation of non-violent masculinities. In 2016, the Caribbean Multi-Country Office promoted the “Gender equality to address masculinities and the participation of men and gender advocates” programme, which focused on the development of the capacities of youth advocates for the elimination of gender-based violence, while in Colombia, UN Women supported the strengthening of the non-hegemonic masculinities movement. In Brazil, UN Women is implementing “The Brave is Not Violent” initiative, a programme that seeks to stimulate a change in men’s attitudes and behaviours and promote positive notions of masculinity to eliminate violence against women and girls. It is currently implemented.
in 15 states in Brazil, and training on the curriculum is being provided in 15 schools.

Another example is the work carried out in recent years in alliance with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) at the Cartagena Inspira Latin American Congress, a continent-wide event with a comprehensive call in the sectors of communication, creativity, innovation and marketing. For the third consecutive year, UN Women’s intervention focused on the publicists’ guild, based on its power and responsibility to create non-sexist advertising narratives. This initiative also established the De Igual a Igual (From Equal to Equal) advertising awards to reward these types of messages.

In 2017, the Caribbean Multi-Country Office contributed to the development of pilot prevention models for the Caribbean region. The office provided financial and technical support for the development and completion of the “Foundations Programme”, a psycho-educational programme designed for young people between the ages of 13 and 24, which is expected will be replicated throughout the Caribbean region. UN Women also supported the implementation of this programme in five high schools in Antigua and Barbuda.

The UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign, launched in 2008 by the then UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, has continued to grow in the region and is another good example of a long-term initiative that aims to change the mindsets of younger generations. In fact, the initiative proclaims the 25th day of the month as “Orange Day” - a day dedicated to taking action to raise awareness and prevent violence against women and girls. In recent years, the voices of survivors and activists, through campaigns, such as #MeToo or #YoTambien, #TimesUp, #Niunamenos, #NotOneMore and #BalanceTonPorc and others, have reached a crescendo that cannot be silenced anymore. And the Latin American and Caribbean region is no exception.
Launched by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2008, the “UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls” campaign aims to mobilize governments and the public opinion to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls all over the world. The campaign, coordinated by UN Women, calls on UN agencies, governments, civil society, women’s organizations, the private sector, the media, men, young people and women and girls themselves to join in the fight against this global pandemic.

The campaign has three action pillars:
1. **No more impunity:** Access to justice, laws and plans
2. **No more victims:** Statistics and support services, protection and restitution for survivors
3. **Everybody’s responsibility:** Primary prevention, awareness-raising and advocacy.

UN Women and its partners have used the UNiTE campaign as a platform to involve governments and civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean, to prevent and address violence against women and girls. In addition, there is an intense mobilization throughout the region during the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence**, linked to the UNiTE campaign to involve members every year and raise public awareness and transform social norms related to violence against women and girls. Achievements of the campaign in the region include the following:

**Approval and dissemination of the Comprehensive Law for the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (Paraguay):**

The “UNiTE to end violence against women” campaign accompanied the process for the approval of the Comprehensive Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women in Paraguay (Law No. 5,777/16). In addition, this law has been widely disseminated, emphasizing the importance of reporting.

**Campaign to end child marriage (Mexico, 2016-2018):**

Within the framework of the “UNiTE” campaign under the leadership of UN Women, 12 United Nations organizations joined the campaign “From A (Aguascalientes) to Z (Zacatecas): Mexico without early and child marriage in the law and in practice” for the elimination of child marriage and reforms through complete legal harmonization in all Mexican states. Today, child marriage is prohibited without exception in 31 of the 32 states of the Federation.
The Latin American model protocol for the investigation gender-related killings of women (femicide / feminicide) 2016-2018.

Within the framework of the UNiTE campaign, UN Women and OHCHR developed the Latin American model protocol for the investigation gender-related killings of women (femicide/feminicide). As a second step, the campaign supported the adaptation of the protocol in Brazil’s national guidelines, with the Secretariat of Policies for Women and the Ministry of Justice, which were adopted in five states between 2014-2016; and in Argentina, with the Public Ministry in 2018. Training in the use of the protocol was provided to all staff of the Prosecutor’s office in Guatemala and to Public Ministry officials in Honduras. In addition, the Ibero-American Association of Public Ministries has assumed the commitment that all member countries adopt the Protocol.

**Figures from the campaign in Latin America and the Caribbean:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNITE Campaign</th>
<th>UN Women Country and Regional Office Digital Statistics</th>
<th>November 25th - December 10th 2016-2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Social Media Fans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>742,600</td>
<td>966,400</td>
<td>★ 1,179,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in fans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★ +39,500</td>
<td>+10,800</td>
<td>+11,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interactions</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>109,400</td>
<td>165,200</td>
<td>143,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of posts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>761</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>★ 1,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website visits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,576</td>
<td>11,199</td>
<td>★ 13,684</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Crowd Tangle, Facebook Insights y Twitter Analytics
Always with the goal of transforming mindsets to achieve gender equality, the “One Win Leads to Another” programme was developed in Brazil and Argentina, in alliance with the International Olympic Committee. Through this programme, sports are used to develop and strengthen the economic and leadership skills of girl athletes, as well as knowledge about their health and their bodies, and knowledge about the prevention of and services available to address violence.

Two good examples of the impact of the work in the prevention of violence against women supported by UN Women in the region are the initiatives carried out in Quito (Ecuador) and in the Mexico City subway. Both are part of UN Women’s global initiative “Safe Cities for Women and Girls” that focuses on the prevention of violence against women in public transport systems.

In Quito’s integrated transport system, safe stations and stops were created with structural changes that included the installation of transparent materials in cabins, improved lighting and implementation of warning bells. In 2014, an action protocol for cases of sexual violence was developed, which led to the creation of a text message platform in 2017 to report harassment on buses, alerting the driver and the police.

The “Safe Cities for Women and Girls” programme has been implemented in different cities in seven countries of the region with outstanding results. With this initiative, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Dominican Republic and Uruguay (since 2018) have successfully reduced the existing risks faced by women and girls, creating safer and egalitarian cities where they can live their lives without fear in the public sphere and develop their full potential.

5.6. UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325

Promoting national agendas for the strengthening of peace and security is another way to improve the protection of women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean based on a prevention logic.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning the work towards the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of a gender perspective in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operation and the consolidation of post-conflict peace and governance.

UN Women has promoted the adoption of national action plans, at both the global and regional levels, as instruments to achieve compliance with the mandates of Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, and sexual violence in armed conflicts, and has promoted the active participation of civil society in the follow-up of State actions on this matter.

In 2017, three countries - Brazil, El Salvador and Guatemala - adopted national plans that were developed with the support and accompaniment of UN Women. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Argentina, Chile and Paraguay also have these plans.

In Brazil, the national government adopted the National Action Plan in March 2017 for a two-year period. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated the preparation of the plan.
with the participation of a working group that included the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Ministry of Human Rights, as well as the Igarapé Institute. The text includes four pillars: participation, prevention and protection, peacebuilding and humanitarian cooperation, and awareness-raising and commitment to improvement.

In El Salvador, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also coordinated the preparation of the plan in association with the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women (ISDEMU) and with the active participation of civil society. The Plan is articulated around the pillars of participation, prevention, protection and reparation, and restitution of rights.

In Guatemala, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM), the Inter-Agency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security (MIMP AZ) and UN Women presented the Plan in August 2017. The Guatemalan Plan has five pillars: 1) Empowerment and participation of women; 2) Training and development of women; 3) Respect for the human rights of women; 4) Leadership of women in peacebuilding situations; 5) Just and transformative reparation measures for violations of the human rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

5.7. THE YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA
UN Women has also participated in the development of the youth, peace and security
agenda at the regional level, which faces many of the same issues as the women, peace and security agenda. In May 2017, it co-organized the Regional Consultation on Youth, Peace and Security in Panama, in partnership with UNFPA, UNDP, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), among others.

The primary purpose of the consultation was to collect inputs from the voices of young people for the study on the implementation of the United National Security Council Resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security.

UN Women sought to promote the participation of young women from across the continent and achieved a majority representation of women from all sub-regions: 58% of the participants from South America, 61% from the Caribbean and 69% from Central America were women.

The format of the activity encouraged the registration of women's voices and their inclusion in the final conclusions. There was also a parallel programme that interviewed and profiled some of the participating young leaders in order to raise their voices and strengthen their advocacy work. One of these young women, from Haiti, was then invited to speak before the Security Council at the Open Debate on Youth, Peace and Security in April 2017.
LIRIOLA LEOTEAU  
National Institute for Women  
Panama

Liriola Leoteau is, at the time of the writing of this report, the Director General of the National Institute for Women of Panama. Before assuming this position, she worked in the judicial system for many years on issues of violence against women and also became actively involved in the prevention of violence against women at the community level in different areas of the country. As such, civil service is just one more facet of her long-term commitment to women’s rights.

1. With Beijing+25 just around the corner, we would like you to share a brief assessment of the current situation for the promotion and advancement of women’s rights and gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean. Where are we, and what is being done right now?

I think that we face a complex and challenging scenario with setbacks in essential aspects and a great deal of disparity between different countries. Indeed, the region has been catalogued as a model for the world; however, on some occasions, we have fallen behind in the implementation of regulatory frameworks or have done so with great difficulty.

2. In recent years, the Government of Panama has promoted various initiatives and assumed a regional and international leadership role in promoting gender equality. What are the reasons behind this?

The Government of Juan Carlos Varela Rodriguez made the political decision to improve the condition of women in the country. This translates into political freedom and, in the case of the National Institute for Women, a significant increase in the budget, from US$ 2 million to US$ 7 million, which has made territorial coverage possible through our National Institute for Women Centres (CINAMU).

The vice president of the country has also promoted and assumed commitments in the field of human rights and the advancement of Panamanian women.

Another important point is that thanks to international cooperation, we have been able to position ourselves internationally as an institute that knows what it wants and where it is going with regard to human rights. I want to highlight the technical support and accompaniment we have received, which has been of the highest level, and that has allowed us to project ourselves throughout the region and spread the good practices implemented in Panama.

3. Could you give us an example of these good practices?

One of our achievements is the national platform with the CINAMU. We have shown that inter-institutional regulation can be achieved within the government ecosystem, based on the awareness and co-
responsibility of all institutions for improving the conditions of women.

4. The elimination of violence against women is a priority for INAMU. What key measures have been taken by the Government of Panama to combat the different forms of violence against women? How has UN Women accompanied this process?

We have been working at the national level with the police, providing both theoretical training and practical work in the communities to provide specialized service for women and girls. Close coordination with the police and the Ministry of Public Security has allowed us to make significant advances in this area throughout the country, despite budgetary limitations.

The INAMU centres have also served as bases to carry out work to strengthen women’s physical, economic and political autonomy as a strategy to combat all expressions of violence against women. From this national platform, we have even provided services in the indigenous territories in their own languages.

UN Women has supported us in our role as hosts of the Regional Consultation prior to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) and in joint work with the vice president in supporting feminist women’s organizations and movements. This work is based on experiences with the other ministers, directors of national authorities and women’s mechanisms in the different countries of the region that have a common agenda, and we have become a model in the region. I would also like to highlight the joint work of all the national authorities in recent years.

UN Women is also working on the Model Law on Femicide/Feminicide, proof that the region is moving from discourse to action. Recently, we had the opportunity to present this Model Law in Washington, which calls upon all of us to not only be harmonized but also aware that further efforts are needed to end impunity and the cultural patterns that devalue women. The financial and technical support of UN Women has been significant since it has allowed us to work on political participation, statistics and gender indicators, which will be very useful in promoting a basic fundamental register on gender issues in the country to influence any political decision. I believe that this work will be of great value to the next Government.

5. As we know, the gaps are not only gender-related, and there are other contributing factors. What is being done to leave no indigenous and Afro-descendent women behind?

We are working in three main areas. The first is a study on matters related to care services, empowerment and autonomy for indigenous women. We are also supporting the National Secretariat for the Development of Afro-Panamanians in conducting a study on women of African descent. And lastly, we are working on the issue of gender and business through an initiative that will allow us to understand how, by what means and why we must work on mainstreaming the gender issue in public policies.
TRANSFORMING STATES AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS FOR GENDER EQUALITY
Like the other institutions of the United Nations, UN Women provides technical, financial and political support to the Member States in their efforts to achieve the goals adopted by the international community and freely assumed by the States. Therefore, in Latin America and the Caribbean as in the rest of the world, UN Women works with key partners at different State and institutional levels.

In addressing UN Women's work with the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda in this report, we highlight the efforts and achievements towards mainstreaming the gender perspective in the plans and strategies of the countries of the region with a view to fulfilling this Agenda.

It is also worth mentioning the many projects on knowledge management, prevention of violence against women, and persecution and punishment of gender-based violence, including the transformation of regulatory frameworks and the creation of new jurisdictions and intervention protocols - areas in which UN Women collaborates, advises and supports public institutions in the countries of the region.

However, work with public institutions to close gender gaps includes other areas. Because of their common objectives and interests, one of UN Women’s key allies and counterparts are the national mechanisms for the advancement of women (MAM).

For example, UN Women accompanied national women’s organizations to develop new gender equality plans in Argentina and the Dominican Republic (“Equal Opportunities and Rights Plan” in Argentina and “Third National Plan for Gender Equality and Gender Equity 2018-2030 (PLANEG III)” in the Dominican Republic), while in Paraguay it provided technical assistance for the design and approval of the IV National Plan for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (IV PlaNI), based on an internal and external evaluation of the previous Equality Plan. UN Women supported the process with the participation of more than 10 public institutions and 15 civil society organizations.

In Uruguay, UN Women also provided technical assistance to INMUJERES in the preparation of the National Strategy for Gender Equality, approved in May 2018 by presidential decree. The strategy reaffirms the country’s commitment to international objectives set by CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, among others, and establishes a roadmap for strengthening the gender approach in public policies in Uruguay. It also identifies the pending challenges in this area for the executive, legislative and judicial powers. This strategy will, in turn, serve as a key input for the development of the National Development Strategy 2050, fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The Strategy was prepared by the National Gender Council, composed of 28 government institutions, the academic sector and civil society, and chaired by INMUJERES. UN Women also collaborated in the dissemination of the strategy among institutions and at the territorial level.

In this same field, one can refer to the regional study on national women’s mechanisms of the region and on the instances that promote gender equality in the regional and subregional integration mechanisms, discussed further in Section 4 of this report.

6.1. SUPPORT TO STATES FOR COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

To promote gender equality and the advancement of women, UN Women advises
and accompanies the States of the region in fulfilling their obligations to international agreements to which they are a party.

The fulfilment of these obligations covers different areas. For example, UN Women supports the implementation of the observations and recommendations of intergovernmental organizations and human rights monitoring bodies such as the periodic sessions of the CSW, including the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action of the CEDAW Committee of Experts. It also provides technical support in the preparation of reports on women’s rights and to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective and relevant indicators for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, universal periodic reviews (UPR) and voluntary national reports presented at the High-Level Political Forums in follow-up to the 2030 Agenda, among others.

UN Women has provided technical and financial support to countries including Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay in the preparation and presentation of periodic reports on advances in compliance with CEDAW, including official State reports, civil society alternative reports, confidential reports by the United Nations country teams (UNCT) and constructive dialogue sessions with States parties before the CEDAW Committee of Experts, as well as the subsequent follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations issued by this committee.

UN Women has also been innovating in knowledge sharing among countries. One example is the South-South cooperation exercise developed between the country offices of Colombia and Mexico in 2016 for the exchange of lessons learned and good practices in the preparation of the country report before the CEDAW Committee. This constituted a preparation exercise for both countries, which, in 2018 and 2019, prepared the basis for their respective periodic reports.

UN Women also organized regional intergovernmental consultations prior to the annual CSW sessions, as well as the follow-up on the agreed conclusions, including support to representatives from both government and civil society organizations, to identify the main advances and challenges in the region regarding the priority and review themes of each session.

The priority themes of CSW sessions 60, 61, 62 and 63 were:

(i) Women’s empowerment and its link to sustainable development;

(ii) Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work;

(iii) Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls;

(iv) Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

These central themes for the region have become the main work areas of UN Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, with both governments and civil society organizations.

The results of each of the regional consultations prior to the CSW contributed to the identification
of a common regional position to influence the global session of the CSW with substantive ministerial statements that identify the main achievements and challenges for the region. For example, the regional consultation prior to the 61st session of the CSW was organized in Panama, which brought together women’s ministers and high authorities on women’s and gender issues from 23 Latin American and Caribbean countries, as well as over 70 representatives from civil society organizations and networks.

The consultation led to the unanimous adoption of the Declaration of Panama16, which highlights the need for macroeconomic policies that contribute to mitigating the impact of the recession and the high unemployment rates of women. The statement also highlights the need to overcome the structural barriers to women’s full access to decent work, taking into account the sharp wage gap between women and men on the continent. This and other priority challenges for the region, such as those related to the empowerment of indigenous women, were subsequently collected in the agreed conclusions at the global session of the CSW.

A year later, in February 2018, the consultation organized in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) prior to the 62nd session of the CSW also produced a joint declaration, the Declaration of Santo Domingo, that includes the regional consensus on the meeting’s specific theme: Women and rurality, recognizing the uniqueness of indigenous and Afro-descendant women.

In December 2018, the regional consultation prior to the 63rd session of the CSW in Buenos Aires (Argentina) resulted in the Declaration of Buenos Aires. The Declaration highlights the need for coordinated and gender-responsive investments in social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure. It emphasizes the importance of universal and gender-based social protection systems to reduce gender gaps in poverty, protect the income security of women throughout their life cycles and strengthen their resilience to crisis. It also refers to the need to ensure accessible services for the care of minors and multisectoral services for survivors of violence. In addition, UN Women is working intensively on the preparations for the Beijing+25 meeting to be held in 2019, supporting governments in reviewing their advances and encouraging the participation of national civil society organizations in various countries, with a view to elaborating a declaration to feed the intergovernmental discussions of Beijing+25. These inputs will be generated in the framework of the XIV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Chile in November 2019, convened by ECLAC with the support of UN Women.

6.2. PUBLIC BUDGETS: A STRATEGIC AREA

The inclusion of the gender approach in national and local budgets is another major area. Gender gaps will not be closed by inertia: they require budgetary efforts, specific investments in critical areas, etc.

There are different aspects related to gender-responsive public budgets. The most relevant

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are: (a) the regulatory and legal frameworks that govern the budget process; (b) programming formats and budget formulation; (c) the accounting and financial systems used to record the budget; (d) gender budget reports; (e) institutional mechanisms created to promote and accompany the implementation of gender-responsive budgets and (f) monitoring and accountability systems on budget implementation.

In many countries of the region, UN Women works closely on all of these aspects with the national statistics offices and the key ministries of finance, labour, health and education.

Between 2016 and 2018, gender-responsive budget initiatives were identified in 15 countries in the region, nine of which received technical assistance from UN Women, and eight of which carried out follow-up and monitoring actions on the SDG agenda and macroeconomic policies, as in the cases of Costa Rica, Uruguay and Jamaica. The Dominican Republic is an example of the joint work between UN Women and the Government for the implementation of gender-responsive budgets. Since 2017, UN Women has advised eight Government entities (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Vice Ministry of Development for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, National Public Prosecutor’s Office, National Statistics Office, Office of the Prosecutor General, Social Office for Public Policies and the “Progressing with Solidarity” programme of the Vice Presidency of the Republic) for the implementation of the guide for gender-responsive planning developed by the United Nations.

In 2018, these eight institutions used gender-responsive budgets for the first time. In addition, new instruments for the planning and preparation of gender-responsive budgets were created, including the monitoring and evaluation mechanism, in order to identify public investments focused on women, social co-responsibility, a culture of equity, and prevention, care and protection for women who are victims of violence.

National development plans are, as previously mentioned, another key tool in which the gender approach can contribute to the advancement of women and girls. Currently, 18 programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean include a gender approach, nine of which received support from UN Women. The mainstreaming of the gender approach focuses on non-discrimination and equal opportunities with varying emphases between countries, from the consideration of the gender approach as a cross-cutting axis that ensures the achievement of national goals to the prioritization of the reduction of gender gaps in objectives primarily related to access to the labour market, education and the reduction of violence.

UN Women works closely with planning agencies to improve monitoring, follow-up and evaluation mechanisms in gender equality, and to introduce these mechanisms in those countries that do not currently have them.

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18. Prepared by UN Women, Office of the Americas and the Caribbean based on data from the ECLAC Planning Observatory.
In Bolivia, for example, UN Women supported the mainstreaming of the gender approach in the National Development Plan and in the local plans of 23 municipalities, and accompanied the gender-based evaluation process of the Development Plan and the Multisectoral Depatriarchalization Plan.

In Colombia, for the first time, the National Development Plan includes a chapter on gender equity, and UN Women succeeded in mainstreaming the gender approach in the territorial development plans of the governorates of Meta, Cauca, Antioquia and Nariño, as well as the municipalities of Villavicencio, Pasto, Popayán and Medellín. As a result, the municipality of Villavicencio included a gender budget annex that reflects public investments that contribute to closing the gaps between men and women. Ecuador also implemented processes for monitoring investment in gender equality in four local governments (Loja, Azuay, Esmeraldas and Manabí), leading to improved dialogue between women’s organizations and the authorities, the creation and institutionalization of specialized instances on gender equality at the local level, and the allocation of public resources to demands prioritized by women. However, these are still pilot experiences that have not been replicated in most of the national territory.

6.3. PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Nations that have experienced profound political and military upheavals and undertaken democratic reconstruction processes as a result of peace negotiations are a case apart because the institutionality is reconfigured and subjected to more substantial interventions than usual. Therefore, these countries also provide an excellent opportunity to promote significant advances in equality and empowerment of women and girls.

Thus, in recent years, UN Women has undertaken considerable efforts in Haiti and Colombia, as well as in Guatemala, which is still recovering from the prolonged armed conflict it experienced in the last century.

HAITI

Strengthening the rule of law and institutionality in Haiti is a priority objective for all United Nations agencies, including UN Women, following the prolonged period of upheavals and political instability in the country, aggravated by high levels of exposure to various disasters (including the dramatic earthquake of 2010 and hurricanes and drought in 2018).

In a context of peacebuilding and within the framework of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the Rule of Law Programme was developed between 2016 and 2017, bringing together the programme components of human rights, access to justice and strengthening of the police and the prison system. In this context, UN Women worked to mainstream the gender dimension in the different components.

Achievements included the strengthening of national institutions, with more than 70 actors from the justice system trained in gender-responsive planning and budgets; the strengthening of the leadership of the Ministry of the Status of Women and the approval of the National Plan to Combat Violence against Women and Girls; and the strengthening of the capacities of more than 210 local partners that provide legal and psychosocial assistance services.
The second phase of the project began in 2018 as part of the United Nations Mission to Support Justice in Haiti (MINUJUSTH). UN Women’s role has focused on mainstreaming a gender perspective throughout the new phase of the project.

**COLOMBIA**

The vital collaboration of UN Women in the negotiation and signing of the Final Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP, as well as in the subsequent phases of accompaniment in the implementation and follow-up on the terms agreed between the Parties, should be framed within the broader role assumed by the UN in this process at the request of the Parties and of the Agreement itself.

During the negotiation phase that culminated in 2016, UN Women focused its efforts on supporting the articulation and participation of Colombian women in the talks, as well as their advocacy actions to ensure the involvement of women negotiators and a technical gender mechanism (the Gender Subcommittee) that will facilitate the inclusion of women’s voices and the gender perspective in the agreements produced by these peace dialogues. Thus, the content of the Agreements was sensibly informed by the demands, requirements, expectations and hopes of Colombian women.19 The year 2016 was a watershed in every way. The signing of the Havana Accords on September 26 renewed hope and marked the beginning of a new stage in Colombian history.

Prior to the plebiscite convened by the Colombian Government on October 2, the United Nations in Colombia - led by UN Women and supported by several international cooperation agencies20 - was deeply involved in supporting a broad women’s movement for peace, represented at the Second National Summit of Women and Peace21, held between September 19 and 21 of that year. It was a high profile and highly relevant political event. However, the adverse result of the widespread consultation (50.21% against, and 49.79% in favour) was a severe blow and astonished many people at home and abroad.

Fortunately, the Agreements were quickly renegotiated to accommodate some of the concerns of those who voted against the referendum, resulting in the signing and ratification of the Final Agreement on November 29.

The Final Agreement not only mainstreams the gender approach as an articulating or guiding principle and in the definitions of purpose and scope of each of the agreed points but also in at least 100 specific provisions, according to the analysis undertaken by UN Women.

In the new phase that began in 2017, UN Women continues to be closely linked to the peacebuilding process, supporting international

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20. Embassies of Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, the United States Agency for International Cooperation (USAID) and the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy.
21. The National Summit of Women and Peace is an alliance between nine women’s organizations, networks and platforms composed of Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas, Negras e Indígenas de Colombia – ANMUCIC, Alianza Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz–IMP-, Casa de la Mujer, Coalición 1325 Colombia, Colectivo de Pensamiento y Acción Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad, Conferencia Nacional de Organizaciones Afrocolombianas - CNOA, Mujeres por la Paz, Red Nacional de Mujeres y Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres. They came together within the framework of a political and programmatic agreement on the participation of women in the peace talks between the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP guerrillas and the ELN, as well as in the endorsement, implementation and verification of the Peace Agreements. This Alliance represents nearly 700 organizational expressions of mixed, ethnic and peasant women -among other regional and local processes-, which have come together to work towards peace as a higher good.
accompaniment within the United Nations system for the implementation of the gender approach, along with the Women’s International Democratic Federation (FDIM), Sweden and the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

UN Women’s new role is established in four areas: first in the support and strengthening of gender mechanisms and women’s participation mechanisms; second, in the partnerships for mainstreaming the gender approach in the monitoring, verification and follow-up processes of the implementation of the Agreement; thirdly, in support of the implementation of the gender-specific measures of the Agreement with the greatest transformative potential; and lastly, in the active participation to consolidate spaces for cooperation between multilateral and State cooperation and the international community to finance the implementation of the Agreement.

Of note with regard to the support and strengthening of gender mechanisms and mechanisms for women’s participation is the Special Authority on Women. At the request of the Commission for Monitoring, Promoting and Verifying the Implementation of the Final Agreement (CSIVI), UN Women provided technical, financial and organizational support to the Special Authority to help ensure the implementation of the gender approach in the Final Agreement. The Authority was created “to contribute to the follow-up of the approach and guarantee women’s rights in the implementation of the Final Agreement” and is made up of representatives from eight national and territorial Colombian women’s organizations. The agreement also establishes a “permanent dialogue with the Commission for Monitoring, Promoting and Implementing the Final Agreement (CSIVI)” for the participation of women’s organizations in the definition of its structure and procedures.

The establishment of this Special Authority on Women as a dialogue partner of the Follow-up Commission is, in itself, a triumph for the Colombian women’s movement and the result of its participation in the negotiation process. It was created through a national consultation process that was directly supported by UN Women, together with the other entities of the International Accompaniment Component that support the gender approach.

In addition, UN Women advances joint actions on issues of reciprocal interest and in areas of complementarity with the UN Verification Mission, most notably the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the development of the Mission’s mandate; design and implementation of tools that facilitate gender-sensitive analysis, monitoring and verification; adoption of referral and counter-referral mechanisms for cases that compromise or endanger the implementation of the gender approach of the agreements on reintegration, security and protection for communities and organizations in the territories; the strengthening of joint work mechanisms at the national and territorial levels; the strengthening of coordination and dialogue with women’s organizations and platforms at the national and territorial levels; and the design and implementation of joint public communication strategies.

UN Women partnered with the Kroc Institute – which, by agreement of the Parties, is officially responsible for preparing the reports
on monitoring, progress and verification of the Agreement – to ensure that the gender perspective is integrated.

The successive reports presented by the Kroc Institute reveal that the implementation of the Agreements is moving at a regular pace but warns that there is an implementation gap of 18% between the specific gender commitments and the full implementation of the stipulations that make up the Final Agreement. This is worrisome because the analysis carried out by UN Women reveals that the promotion of the gender measures in the Agreements would function as a catalytic agent and accelerate the implementation of all the Agreements.

GUATEMALA
In Guatemala, UN Women has worked to generate new spaces for dialogue between organizations that defend the rights of indigenous women, traditional authorities and the judiciary, with a view to strengthening collaboration between ordinary justice and the customary justice of indigenous peoples.

So indigenous women have placed themselves at the centre of the debate, their leadership has been recognized, and their contributions have been legitimized as a stakeholder in the national debate, also generating opportunities to present their concerns and proposals directly before the judicial authorities. The process included the participation of 260 traditional authorities of 18 indigenous justice councils from 22 departments of the country (61% women, 39% men).

In 2016, the Peacebuilding Fund opened a unique window for gender and youth to present, in a highly competitive process, projects that specifically benefit these populations and empower their voices and action. UN Women presented a series of projects that included a project on the empowerment of women survivors of sexual violence and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, and another on realizing the transformational effect of the Sepur Zarco reparation sentence to break the continuum of conflict and post-conflict related sexual violence.

This second project aimed to ensure the implementation of the landmark ruling of the Sepur Zarco case, which condemned acts of sexual slavery against Q’eqchi’ women on the Sepur Zarco military base during the Guatemalan armed conflict. The case marks a milestone in breaking the impunity that traditionally surrounds sexual violence and the implementation of the sentence, and has allowed Sepur Zarco’s 14 grandmothers to become leaders in their communities, in their country and in the world.

Finally, in November 2018, the Constitutional Court issued its final verdict ratifying the conviction and reparation measures. That same year, in partnership with the National Union of Guatemalan Women and the Memorial para la Concordia (Sites of Conscience) organization, an innovative precedent was established with the launch of the first virtual reality video (360 degrees) in the country: “Un viaje en realidad virtual de la memoria de Sepur Zarco”, which tells the story of the emblematic grandmothers. The video was presented at the XV Guatemala International Book Fair, with a great reception among young viewers.
THE CASE OF SEPUR ZARCO:
GUATEMALAN WOMEN WHO ROSE UP FOR JUSTICE IN A WAR-TORN NATION

During the 36-year-long Guatemalan civil war, indigenous women were systematically raped and enslaved by the military in a small community near the Sepur Zarco outpost. What happened to them then was not unique, but what happened next, changed history. From 2011 – 2016, 15 women survivors fought for justice in the highest court of Guatemala. The landmark case resulted in the conviction of two former military officers of crimes against humanity and granted 18 reparation measures to the women survivors and their community. The abuelas of Sepur Zarco, as the women are respectfully referred to, are now waiting to experience justice. Justice, for them, includes education for the children of their community, access to land, a health-care clinic and such measures that will end the abject poverty their community has endured across generations. Justice must be lived.

The day the military came to take her husband and son is etched into Maria Ba Caal’s memory, but some of the details are fading. “When my husband and my 15-year-old son were taken away, they were working men. The army came in the afternoon and took them away... I don’t remember the date, but that was the last time I saw my husband and son,” she said. It’s been 36 years since that day. Maria Ba Caal is now 77 years old.

Like many other Maya Q’eqchi’ women of Sepur Zarco, a small rural community in the Polochic Valley of north-eastern Guatemala, Ba Caal is still looking for the remains of her husband and son who were forcibly disappeared and most likely killed by the Guatemalan army in the early 1980s.

The Guatemalan conflict

The Guatemalan internal armed conflict dates back to 1954 when a military coup ousted the democratically elected President, Jacobo Arbenz. The subsequent military rulers reversed the land reforms that benefited the poor (mostly indigenous) farmers, triggering 36 years of armed conflict between the military and left-wing guerrilla groups and costing more than 200,000 lives. The majority of those killed—83%—were indigenous Maya people.

What happened in Sepur Zarco?

In 1982, the military set up a rest outpost in Sepur Zarco. The Q’eqchi’ leaders of the

22. The conflict in Guatemala is officially referred as the “internal armed conflict”.
23. The timeline has been corroborated with facts from the following sources: Memory of Silence: The Guatemalan Truth Commission Report, Case Study Series: Women in Peace and Transition Processes and Timeline: Guatemala’s Brutal Civil War by PBS News Hour
24. For more facts and figures, see https://www.ghrc-usa.org/our-work/important-cases/sepur-zarco/
area were seeking legal rights to their land at the time. The military retaliated with forced disappearance, torture and killing of indigenous men, and rape and slavery of the women.

“They burned our house. We didn’t go to the Sepur military base (rest outpost) by choice... they forced us. They accused us of feeding the guerrillas. But we didn’t know the guerrillas. I had to leave my children under a tree to go and cook for the military... and...” Maria Ba Caal leaves that sentence unfinished. It hangs in the air as we sit in front of her mud shack. Her great-grandchildren are playing nearby. She cries quietly.

Rape and sexual slavery are not words that translate easily into Q’eqchi. “We were forced to take turns,” she continues. “If we didn’t do what they told us to do, they said they would kill us.”

For years afterwards, Maria Ba Caal and other women who were enslaved by the military were shunned by their own communities and called prostitutes. Guatemala’s civil war was not only one of the deadliest in the region; it also left behind a legacy of violence against women.

The community of Sepur Zarco has about 226 families today. From the nearest town of Panzós, it’s a 26-mile drive down a dusty road that is only partially paved.

A few miles before Sepur Zarco are the ruins of the Tinajas Farm, surrounded by cornfields. In May 2012, the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation exhumed 51 bodies of indigenous peoples from this site, killed and buried in mass graves by the Guatemalan military. The evidence from Tinajas was one of the turning points in the Sepur Zarco case. Paula Barrios, who heads Mujeres Transformando el Mundo (Women Transforming the World) explained that the indigenous communities living around the area believed that more than 200 men were brought here and never seen again.

“This was the truth of the Q’eqchi’ people, but we had to prove that the stories were true. The exhumation continued for 22 days and cost Q. 100 000 (US$ 13 500). Some families heard the news and came to the site, hoping to find their lost ones. Women from the Sepur Zarco community came and cooked for the crew. For four days, they dug and dug but didn’t find any bodies. The anthropologists said that the next day would be the last day.”

In 2011, 15 women survivors of Sepur Zarco25—now respectfully called the abuelas (grandmothers)—took their case to the highest court of Guatemala, with the support of local women’s rights organizations, UN Women and other UN partners.

After 22 hearings, on March 2, 2016, the court convicted two former military officers of crimes against humanity on counts of rape, murder and slavery, and granted 18 reparation measures to the women survivors and their communities. This was

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25 The lawsuit was based on the violation of 15 women from Sepur Zarco, but the court could only verify the evidence of 11 of them as three of the victims died.
the first time in history that a national court prosecuted sexual slavery during conflict using national legislation and international criminal law.

The abuelas fought for justice and reparations not only for themselves but for change that would benefit the entire community. The court sentence promised to reopen the files on land claims, set up a health centre, improve the infrastructure for the primary school and open a new secondary school, as well as offer scholarships for women and children—measures that can lift them out of the abject poverty they continue to endure.

When we took our case to court, we believed we would win, because we told the truth,” said Maria Ba Caal. “To me, it’s essential that our voice and our history is known to our country so that what we lived through never happens to anyone else.”

As part of the reparation measures, civil society organizations worked with the Guatemalan Ministry of Education to develop a comic book for children, which narrates the history of Sepur Zarco. The book will be distributed in secondary schools across Guatemala City, as well as in the municipalities of the Alta Verapaz area.

Only one of the 11 surviving abuelas who fought for the groundbreaking case has a home in Sepur Zarco. Most of the others live in the surrounding communities of San Marcos, La Esperanza and Pombaac in makeshift homes. There’s a small plot of land behind the women’s centre that’s now under construction, which has been promised to the abuelas for building their homes. Maria Ba Caal and Felisa Cuc gave us a tour of the area.

Felisa Cuc is 81 years old and is waiting for her home. She wants a house of brick and tin. “When I heard the sentence, I was delighted. I thought my life would improve. But at this moment, I don’t know if I will live long enough to see the results.” Doña Felisa has had a hard life.

The soldiers took her husband away in 1982 and tortured him. He was never seen again. “I was raped, along with my two daughters, who were young married women then. Their husbands had left. We tried to escape, we sought shelter in abandoned houses, but the soldiers found us. My daughters were raped in front of me.”

The Sepur Zarco military rest outpost was closed in 1988, and the conflict formally ended in 1996 with the signing of the peace agreement. But the abuelas continued to struggle for a minimum of dignity, a piece of land and food.

Doña Felisa took us to her home in Pombaac, walking through dirt roads across cornfields. The last house in Pombaac is hers. “There are so many needs here,” she said. “At this moment, I need something to eat. No one knows how much longer I will live. I need land for my children. Perhaps if they have land to cultivate they can help me, feed me.”

Of all the reparation measures, land restitution is perhaps one of the most critical
but challenging to implement since much of the land being claimed is privately held. The President has to appoint an institution, and the Ministry of Finance has to provide a budget to purchase the privately owned land and then redistribute it.

One reparation measure that has had some impact is the free mobile health clinic, which serves 70 – 80 people each day. “We had to walk a long way to get to a clinic, but now it’s closer. Each community takes turns receiving care at the clinic. Many women from my community have received medicine, but there are illnesses that cannot be treated here. We dream of a hospital that can treat all our illnesses,” explained Rosario Xo, one of the abuelas.

Demesia Yat, an outspoken figure among the abuelas, recognizes how far they have come and also what’s at stake: “Our effort, first as women, and second as grandmothers, is very important. It’s true that justice was done. Now, we are asking for education for our children and grandchildren so that the young people in the community have opportunities and are not like their elders, who could not study. Our claims are with the government. We waited for many years for justice; now we have to wait for reparations.”

The Sepur Zarco case is about justice, as shaped by women who endured unspeakable horror and loss, and today they are demanding to experience that justice in their everyday lives.

“I gave everything to get justice,” said Maria Ba Caal, as we said goodbye. “I want to see the results before I die. I don’t know how much more time I have in this world.”

With the support of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, UN Women is leading efforts to implement the transformative sentence delivered in the Sepur Zarco case, working in partnership with national authorities, international women’s organizations, Guatemalan civil society and other UN agencies.
EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
As mentioned in the initial sections, the political climate for advancing gender equality has deteriorated in many countries of the region as a result of the strengthening of conservative and fundamentalist movements. In spite of this, local and national women’s organizations, together with international and multilateral institutions including UN Women, as well as several governments committed to gender equality, tirelessly promote initiatives for women’s empowerment.

For the sake of greater clarity, we will classify these initiatives into three groups based on their primary focus: a) those that seek women’s economic empowerment, b) those that focus on women’s political empowerment and c) those that focus on organizational empowerment. Obviously, two or even all three of these fields overlap in many of the initiatives since they are mutually reinforcing.

7.1. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

“You can’t make chocolate without cocoa,” proclaims a popular expression in Latin America and the Caribbean. The experience of women, after their still recent incorporation into labour markets, confirms this: autonomy is achieved through the economy.

However, it is just as important to understand that the sustainable development and economic growth of Latin American and Caribbean societies must incorporate women into economic and productive activity under fair and just conditions. Thus, having a transformative agenda for women’s economic empowerment is one of the priorities of UN Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

For this reason, it should be noted that the last three sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (2016, 2017, 2018) were dedicated to the discussion of women’s economic empowerment. This speaks to the relevance of the issue and how it is addressed within the United Nations system.

As previously mentioned, UN Women led the regional debates, which included national women’s mechanisms and civil society organizations. These meetings led to the adoption of the Declaration of Panama in February 2017, the Declaration of Santo Domingo in February 2018 and the Declaration of Buenos Aires in December 2018, which reflect the consensus positions of the region.

Also relevant was the celebration of the High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment in San Jose (Costa Rica) in July 2016. This space was made possible thanks to the leadership of former UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, and was chaired by former President of Costa Rica, Luis Guillermo Solís, and CEO of IKEA-Switzerland, Simona Scarpaleggia.

On this occasion, UN Women provided a report of good national practices on women’s economic empowerment in Latin America and the Caribbean, participated in the dialogue tables and prepared the final report for the meeting.

Discussions revolved around the elimination of legal barriers to women’s economic empowerment, addressing the care economy, reducing gender pay gaps, expanding opportunities for women working in the informal sector, promoting financial and digital inclusion of women, promoting women’s entrepreneurship and increasing the productivity of women-owned businesses.
The event was attended by world leaders from the public and private sectors, academia and civil society, who presented different recommendations to increase women’s economic revenues in the framework of the implementation of the SDGs. In addition, it highlighted the importance of initiating a debate in the region on women’s economic empowerment as part of the discussions between governments and regional banks.

The conclusions and recommendations of the Panel are oriented towards the achievement of the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, which once again confirms the deep interconnection of the themes articulated in this report.

### EIGHT AREAS TO PROMOTE WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The *Analysis of Discriminatory Legislation in Latin America and the Caribbean on Women’s Autonomy and Economic Empowerment* on discriminatory laws and regulations that hinder women’s economic empowerment, jointly developed by UN Women, the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and the Latin American Team on Justice and Gender (ELA) identifies eight normative areas in which progress is needed to achieve Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda: achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. These areas include:

1. Advancing ratification, compliance and monitoring of international conventions and agreements.

Although all countries have ratified the CEDAW in Latin America and the Caribbean, not all have signed the Optional Protocol, which expands the capacity of the CEDAW Committee to follow up the implementation of the Convention by States and establishes mechanisms for complaint and inquiry before the Committee. Furthermore, the ratification of the ILO Conventions that promote equal rights between women and men has been quite disparate. Despite ratification of the various international and regional conventions, there are still gaps in the implementation and monitoring of these conventions.

2. Formally overcoming indirect discrimination that affects women in their relationship with property and assets.

The economic regulation defined in the laws establishes the conditions in which assets are acquired and managed during the couple’s relationship and how they are distributed following a separation or divorce.
Regulations in some countries continue to recognize men as head of household, which limits the autonomy and freedom of women to dispose of family resources, choose their life plans and make the necessary decisions in the course of their personal relationships. On the other hand, preferential arrangements after separation or divorce proceedings in Latin America and the Caribbean are established by agreement of the parties, although in the absence of agreements, most of the legislation establishes a preference for maternal care. These regulations strengthen the role of women as caregivers, which, in turn, increases their risk of falling in scenarios of vulnerability. Joint custody, based on the co-responsibility of the parties, contributes more decisively to gender equality. However, joint custody without shared care responsibility prior to separation can be very harmful to women in situations of gender-based violence, abandonment or non-responsible fatherhood. It is suggested that the legislation not impose a type of custody by default but rather analyse the specific conditions of each couple and family.

3. Eliminating labour law regulations that exclude women from certain types and modalities of work.

In many countries of the region, there are regulations that exclude women from certain types and modalities of work, such as night work, heavy lifting jobs, employment in certain industrial undertakings and even overtime work. Based on principles of protecting the health or physical integrity of women, these regulations refer to stereotyped conceptions of gender that, in many cases, group women with children.

On the other hand, the right to access the same jobs and occupations implicitly implies the right of access to the same responsibilities, but women are still underrepresented in positions of responsibility and decision-making in companies. Conscious of the imbalance, some countries are promoting special affirmative measures in laws to reduce these differences.

4. Applying the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value according to the terms of ILO Convention 100.

In relation to wages, the primary sources of discrimination refer to the formulation of restrictive criteria regarding the application of ILO Convention No. 100 on equal remuneration. Some countries do not consider certain payments in cash or in-kind (for example, social benefits or entertainment expenses) within the remuneration concept, which prevents a correct application of the Convention. In addition, there are significant limitations in the implementation of the principle of work of equal value given that most countries apply equal pay only to same or similar work, and not according to the added value that it represents.

5. Eliminating discrimination in terms of social protection and pensions.

Within social protection systems, mainly regarding pensions, the main gender
discriminations are conditioned by a twin-track approach. The first is determined by the design of contributory pension systems that are linked to the performance of a remunerated economic activity. This excludes the vast majority of women who do not participate in the labour market or who participate under much more precarious employment conditions, even though they are carrying out functions essential to society and the economy such as care work. The second form of discrimination is subject to the establishment of systems that are based on a typically "male" working life pattern, that is, many years of contribution and uninterrupted linear work trajectories, as compared to the trajectories of women, which are generally interrupted by pregnancy and/or child-rearing. The study also identifies discriminatory regulations for women with regards to retirement pensions. One is the establishment of retirement ages differentiated by gender (lower for women), which in some instances is discriminatory because it implies a shorter period of contribution and lesser savings. Another is the existence of systems that calculate benefits based on specific mortality scales by gender, which penalizes women due to their higher average life expectancy.

6. Expanding the rights of female domestic workers towards real equality with workers generally.

To date, 14 countries in the region have ratified ILO Convention No. 189 on domestic workers and have adapted their labour Codes, social security systems and employment laws towards the recognition of the rights of domestic workers (including specific laws that have been enacted to safeguard those rights). However, these rights are not yet equal in terms of access to social protection, the minimum wage, work hours and paid annual leave, or the benefits provided to these female workers.

7. Better maternity coverage and protection.

Only 11 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean respect the minimum maternity leave of 14 weeks established in ILO Convention No. 183. Moreover, discriminatory aspects related to the rights of pregnant women to obtain and keep a job are identified, including the absence of prohibition of the practice of requesting pregnancy tests to obtain and keep a job in certain countries. Also detected were the lack of protection against dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity, regulations which require the employer to pay for leave (which can be a source of indirect discrimination in hiring), non-provision of benefits commensurate with salary or the non-guarantee of the right of women to an equivalent post after the period of leave.

8. Extending and delving deeper into legislation on shared responsibility for care work.

Although the centrality of care work on the public agenda has been gaining ground recently in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the current progress of legislation towards achieving greater co-
responsibility of the State, companies and men in the care work continues to be very limited. Paternity leaves are still non-existent or insufficient, as are laws that provide for the right to care or be cared for as a universal right of citizenship, guaranteed for both men and women, avoiding the reinforcement of gender stereotypes associated with care.

In section 4, we refer to the presentation in March 2017 of the regional report *Progress of women in Latin America and the Caribbean 2017: Transforming economies, realizing rights,* and we highlighted some of its most relevant findings. We bring it up again here to refer to the fact that it was first presented at the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women; then in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay, with great repercussion in the media and social networks; and in Madrid, as part of an event co-organized with the Ibero-American General Secretariat, SEGIB, in November 2017.

In parallel, UN Women promoted the regional launch of the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) in January 2018. It should be recalled that UN Women co-leads the Coalition’s General Secretariat with the ILO and the OECD. The event was held in Panama, whose vice president, at the time, was named Champion of the Coalition for Latin America and the Caribbean, and brought together more than 200 participants from 10 countries. During the event, it was agreed to prepare a Regional Plan for the implementation of the EPIC, which was presented to the Coalition’s Interim Steering Committee in May 2018.

In November 2018, in partnership with the Government of Uruguay - through the Secretariat of Care and INMUJERES - and OECD, UN Women co-organized a regional dialogue in Montevideo on policies for women’s economic empowerment. During the event, the study *Recognize, Reduce and Redistribute Unpaid Care Work* was presented, which compiles inspiring practices in Latin America and the Caribbean. The dialogue led to the creation of a community of experts to influence regional policies in this area and helped to position UN Women globally, together with the OECD.

It is also worth noting the work of UN Women in the framework of the G20 Summit that took place in the region in Buenos Aires in October 2018. UN Women supported prior consultations with Women 20 (W20), a group parallel to the G20, and provided substantial inputs on labour inclusion and rural development, including the policy report *Gender Equality, Food Security and Climate Change: A closer look at the linkages;* in addition to co-directing the work table on rural

Source: *Analysis of Discriminatory Legislation in Latin America and the Caribbean on Women’s Economic Autonomy and Empowerment.* SEGIB and UN Women, pgs. 6-7 – presented in Madrid, Spain, in October 2018.
In this way, UN Women managed to position itself for future meetings of the W20. The fruits of this work were reflected in the inclusion of various gender considerations in the final declaration adopted by the heads of state in November 2018.

In Colombia, the importance of women’s economic empowerment was subject of an intense debate in 2018, which was catalysed through the process of preparation and public discussion of the national report Progress of Women in Colombia 2018: Transforming economies, realizing rights, in line with the world report (2015) and the regional report (2017) of the same name.

The private sector can play a leading role in women’s economic empowerment.

To this end, continuous work has been carried out with the public and private sectors within the framework of the UN Women and UN Global Compact Joint initiative “Women’s Empowerment Principles: Equality means business”.

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**EQUALITY MEANS BUSINESS**

Women’s empowerment principles

Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, establish more stable and fair societies, achieve the internationally agreed goals for development, sustainability and human rights, improve quality of life for women, men, families and communities, and promote businesses’ operations and goals.

Yet, ensuring the inclusion of women’s talents, skills, experience and energies requires intentional actions and deliberate policies.

The seven Women’s Empowerment Principles provide a set of considerations to help the private sector focus on the key elements integral to promoting gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community. The Principles are:

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers
4. Promote education, training and professional development for women
Between 2016 and 2018, more and more public and private companies adopted these principles in Latin America and the Caribbean, totalling 479 by the end of 2018. For example, in Uruguay, there were no companies committed to these Principles at the beginning of 2017, but 15 companies had adopted them by year’s end. Costa Rica and Argentina did not join the programme until 2018, and in that same year, 14 companies in Argentina and 28 in Costa Rica committed to the Principles.

In 2017, The Power of Hiring: How to hire women-owned businesses was published in Brazil, which has been circulated widely among business networks committed to the Principles in Brazil. The Women’s Empowerment Principles, proposed by UN Women and the United Nations Global Compact in 2010, are the leading platform of the Win-Win Programme, officially launched in December 2017. Work in 2018 focused on capacity building with partners and stakeholders to start implementing the programme as scheduled.

This programme is one of the initiatives of the European Union Partnership Instrument and is implemented by UN Women in collaboration with the ILO to promote gender equality through the private sector. It is being implemented in six countries in Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Jamaica and Uruguay. Its overall objective is to contribute to women’s economic empowerment, recognizing women as beneficiaries and partners of growth and development, increasing the commitment of the private sector (companies and employer organizations) to gender equality, women’s empowerment and strengthening of the capacities of companies to implement these commitments.

In 2018, UN Women and Bonafont—a brand of Grupo Danone—developed and presented a model to work with the private sector in Mexico, which will be replicated by UN Women worldwide. During its first year of implementation, the innovative initiative
“Moving Forward for Equality”, has become a good practice that is motivating other private sector partners towards women’s economic empowerment in the country. “Moving Forward for Equality” is based on a programmatic, managerial and communicational approach through three pillars of action: 1) Inclusive economic recovery of women from areas affected by the 2017 earthquakes; 2) Promotion of gender equality within Danone Mexico, ensuring that all women have access to the same working conditions and opportunities as men; and 3) Increasing awareness of the importance of equal opportunities between women and men in Mexico.

The results of the programme are more than encouraging. Most notably, there has been a 72% advance reported in the implementation of the company’s new parental policy; 20 work centres were established with flexible hours, promoting a better work-life balance, and 400 of the company’s 1 500 employees were trained in ending gender stereotypes.

Just as important is the commitment of 10 large companies to gender equality, including City Express, Creel, Honeywell and HSBC. The major annual Bonafont 5-kilometer race mobilized 70 000 women in support of gender equality in Mexico City, Monterrey, Guadalajara and Puebla.

Brazil’s ratification of ILO Convention No. 189 in 2017 should also be highlighted as an important step for the country that settles a historical debt on formalization and protection of domestic workers. This ratification was the result of a long process of political advocacy supported by UN Women and the ILO, in close coordination with the national mechanism for the advancement of women, the National Secretariat of Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality of the Ministry of Human Rights, the National Federation of Domestic Workers and women’s organizations including THEMIS.
A graduate in social work studies from the University of the Republic (Uruguay, 1979), Mariella Mazzotti has served as President of the Montevideo Commission on Women (1995-2005), National Director of Citizen Development within the Ministry of Social Development (2005 -2010) and Director of Municipal Development and Participation of Montevideo (2010 - 2015). At the time of this report, she directs the National Institute for Women.

1. With Beijing+25 just around the corner, we would like you to share a brief assessment of the current situation for the promotion and advancement of women’s rights and gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean. Where are we, and what is being done right now?

In the last decade, there have been very significant advances in Latin America and the Caribbean towards the recognition of women’s rights and their fundamental role in sustainable development processes. The impetus of the United Nations and its different agencies has been key to the development of studies of actual conditions, proposals and recommendations, and consensus platforms. All these advances are reflected in the institutional strengthening of the gender mechanisms of some countries, in public policies and progressive regulatory frameworks, in particular, in the fight against gender-based violence and in pursuit of greater economic autonomy, in care work policies, as well as in demand for parity in political participation.

Without a doubt, the sexual and reproductive rights agenda has achieved the least progress. We have also witnessed the strengthening of women’s and feminist social movements and an articulation of the agendas of women’s rights and environmental care policies.

However, in recent years, we observe with concern the emergence of opinion leaders who promote anti-rights discourses and seek to distort the democratic and humanist objectives of the gender agenda.

2. It has been over two years since the adoption of the Montevideo Strategy at the XIII Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Have there been advances in the implementation of the measures agreed there? Which ones would you highlight? And what are the biggest barriers to moving forward at the pace required?
The Montevideo Strategy, approved by consensus, represents a roadmap that guides the implementation of the 2030 Regional Agenda and the SDGs; as such, it provides a tool to guide the countries of the region in the medium term, making it possible to further work in the different areas of implementation during this period.

In the various meetings of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference of Women/ECLAC, I have been able to verify that the countries have adopted the Montevideo Strategy as a reference framework for the design, implementation and evaluation of gender policies as State policies.

3. The Care Act recently adopted by Uruguay is considered exemplary by many. What does this law represent for Uruguayan society? What are the next steps towards gender equality that you would like for your country?

The National Integrated Care System (SNIC), understood as a new pillar of Uruguay’s social protection matrix, required the construction of a legal, institutional and social base that would provide long-term sustainability.

Care affects everyone’s daily life. That is why the SNIC seeks to establish a universal policy that gradually guarantees access to fair quality standards for all people regardless of their condition, income or place of residence, improving the quality of care services, dignifying the task of caregivers and freeing up women’s time who have historically been responsible for invisible work in the household.

Of note is the creation by law of the Care Advisory Council, composed of social actors representing the various action areas: unions, companies, academia, associations of retirees and persons with disabilities, children’s organizations, women’s and feminist organizations.

With regards to statistical data, it is important to ensure the availability of public data that includes the gender variable in all State registers, to improve the formulation and implementation of policies, as well as age, ethnicity and race, gender identity, territory, disability, gender-based violence and time-use variables.

Sexual and reproductive health policies, attention to gender-based violence in women, girls, boys and adolescents, and the primary and secondary mental health response should be strengthened.

In addition, the participation of Uruguayan women in active spaces of power in the political, economic and institutional sphere remains a debt to a substantive democracy. Thus, it is necessary to promote dissemination activities aimed at cultural transformations that are better than traditional social representations and generate affirmative actions for the most excluded groups of women.

4. We are just a little over 10 years away from 2030. The SDGs and the 2030
Agenda still seem a distant horizon in all fields, and certainly, also in terms of gender equality. “Leaving no one behind” means concentrating more considerable efforts on the most marginalised, and women are one of those groups. Could you address this, please?

The slogan of “leaving no one behind” is entirely in force, and I consider it a democratic commitment of the States to direct action in this area, especially in periods of stagnation and recession, which unfortunately many countries are experiencing.

On the other hand, it is necessary to deepen the proposals and recommendations for public policies that articulate the issue of poverty and gender equality, since there is a pre-eminence of welfare policies that identify women as the object of benefits and services rather than as individuals with rights.

Placing care policies on the national agenda as a way to increase shared responsibility between men and women is a strategic action that must be articulated with effective labour force participation processes within the changing framework of economic systems.

States need an effective political will to define social investment based on these guidelines and to develop effective programmes that specifically reach women and girls, boys and adolescents whose rights have been violated, with an innovative perspective that transcends gender stereotypes.

5. Finally, we would appreciate it if you could address the role that UN Women plays and has played in promoting women’s rights and advancing gender equality in recent years.

As indicated in response to the first question, I understand that the different United Nations agencies play an irreplaceable role in assisting States to define processes of exchange, reflection, analysis of public policies and development of information and knowledge to understand the complexity and dynamics of the reality.

UN Women, as an agency specialized in promoting women’s rights in their broadest diversity, has supported the programme initiatives of each country within a framework that respects the guidelines of each government. Regional forums stand out as spaces for the growth of female leadership, institutional learning and exchange of good practices, relying on UN Women and its technical and advisory team, known for their outstanding reliability and commitment to the humanistic and democratic mission.
7.2. PROMOTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Another area of work in women’s economic empowerment is the promotion and support of women entrepreneurs.

A significant initiative in this field is the multi-country programme “Broadening Economic Opportunities for Rural Women Entrepreneurs in Latin America” (BEO) programme, implemented by UN Women in El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and Nicaragua, with funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

Between 2016 and 2017, the programme contributed to the empowerment of 98 women’s organizations and 3,770 women from rural areas in the four countries, exceeding the percentage of young women who participated in the initiative (reaching 36% in the four countries compared to the 30% expected).

In El Salvador, a successful project for women’s economic empowerment has been developed, initially focused on women in rural areas but today with national coverage. This “Women’s Fund” is an initiative of the Ministry of Social Inclusion (SIS) with initial funding from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), and the support of the Development Bank of El Salvador (BANDESAL) and UN Women. More recently, the European Union and the Luxembourg development cooperation have joined the project.

The Fund provides loans with preferential terms to women’s businesses in any productive area or field but also provides assistance and technical support to women entrepreneurs. According to the project’s external evaluation, the initiative allowed women to enter the formal credit system, improved their self-esteem and increased their empowerment in general.

UN Women also supports other projects to strengthen women’s entrepreneurship in rural Bolivia with Amazonian nut producers; in Ecuador with women entrepreneurs from the territory of Loja; in Honduras with women entrepreneurs from the Lenca ethnic group, to name a few examples. In Haiti, work has also been carried out with peasant women through a feminist farm-school in the community of Saint-Michel-de-l’Attalaye in the department of Artibonite. The project includes classrooms and dormitories for women who move from remote communities and seeks to provide rural women with skills and technical knowledge to carry out sustainable agriculture projects, as well as facilitate access to financial resources. The training provided by the farm-school is also open to boys. To date, around 250 people have passed through their classrooms.

Although not directly related to the promotion of entrepreneurship, it is also worth mentioning the approval of the Public Policy Law for Rural Women in Paraguay in 2016. UN Women provided technical and political assistance, institutional communication and coordination to promote normative advances for rural women. The approval of the law was followed by the creation of an Inter-institutional Commission for its implementation in 2017. That same year, UN Women, in association with OXFAM, published a report on women and access to land, as one of the most important root causes of inequality and a politically sensitive issue. In addition, events such as the international colloquium “Equality in Land Governance” (with the support of FAO and UN Women) and the international seminar “Challenges and Opportunities for an Economy that Empower
Deyanira Cordoba, 23, is part of the Empowerment of Women Coffee Growers of Tablon de Gomez project under UN Women’s economic empowerment programme in Colombia, implemented by Corporation for the Social, technological and economic development of Colombia (CORPDESARROLLO) and funded by the Government of Sweden. As part of a UN Women project, she has learned about her financial rights, physical autonomy and more. The future holds many possibilities for this talented artist and coffee grower, but whichever path she chooses, Deyanira will always be connected to coffee and her community in the mountains of Colombia.

“I started picking coffee when I was a little girl, maybe six years old. I would help my mother pick the ripe, red, coffee cherries and put them in the bucket. My mother grew coffee in the land around our house. I still help her, and my brother too, he has some property. My father is sick. He can’t work like before.

I love working with coffee. Tomorrow I will go to the field early in the morning and put some fertilizers. Since it has rained so much...
today, the soil will be ready for the nutrients. Then I will pick out the weeds. In the rainy season, the weeds grow quickly. The harvest time is in June or July, and as the coffee starts ripening, the land is full of colours—all shades of green, yellow and red.

Most of the young people here help their families growing and picking coffee. They say it’s a way of forgetting all our troubles. When I pick coffee, I don’t feel any stress.

I joined the project last year, and since then, I have learned so many things. Most importantly, I have learned the value of women. I used to have low self-esteem before, but not anymore. I have learned to be comfortable in my own body. My dream is to become a coffee entrepreneur and help my parents and my community. It’s not just men who can do business. We women can make and achieve our own goals.”


7.3. POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

One of the significant advances of the region towards the active participation of women for the expansion of democracy in public spaces has been the adoption of the concept of “parity democracy”, a process in which numerous civil society organizations have intervened and for which UN Women provided relevant conceptual inputs. As a result of this effort, and with the collaboration of the Latin American Parliament and the OAS, an Advocacy Framework to consolidate parity democracy was approved at the end of 2015.

Parity democracy “seeks to guarantee the balanced representation of women and men in all spaces of public power, and broadens the basis for the participation of women in decision-making at all levels,” and therefore “promotes a new social balance between women and men based on joint responsibility in all spheres of public and private development” 27.

The Advocacy Framework approved by the Parlatino has been a vital tool for the establishment of a new social contract that eliminates all exclusion of women and girls and thus promotes the balance between women and men, furthering joint responsibility in all spheres of life. The document has served as a reference for national parliaments in the region in the implementation of institutional and political reforms that guarantee substantive equality between men and women in all areas of decision-making.

**Women's political participation in Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Countries with parity laws**
- Argentina
- Bolivia
- Costa Rica
- Ecuador
- México
- Nicaragua
- Honduras
- Panamá

**Women occupy 30.6% of seats in Latin-American and Caribbean parliaments**

**Executive Branch**
- 26.8% of female ministers
- 6 Female Head of State or Government in 2014
- 3 Female Head of State or Government in 2019

**Local Governments**
- 14.5% female city mayors
- 29.2% female counselors

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3. Barbados' Prime Minister Mia Mottley, Grenada’s PM Keith Mitchell and Trinidad and Tobago’s head of State Paula Mae Weekes.
4. CEPAL, Observatorio de Igualdad de Género de América Latina y el Caribe - 2017; own elaboration. This percentage has been calculated with data of Latin America, since there isn’t enough data for the Caribbean. The percentages for Argentina date from 2013. There’s no data for Haiti.
5. CEPAL, Observatorio de Igualdad de Género de América Latina y el Caribe - 2017; own elaboration. This percentage has been calculated with data of Latin America, since there isn’t enough data for the Caribbean. The percentage for Venezuela dates from 2006. There’s no data for Argentina and Haiti.

Source: Prepared by UN Women, 2019
To promote this model and ensure equality between men and women in decision-making spaces, UN Women and the other institutions involved in promoting this change face at least three significant challenges:

1. Promote change towards a State model that is social, inclusive, responsible and capable of guaranteeing substantive equality and parity, in its regulations, methods, mechanisms, policies and public services, so that women and men enjoy the same opportunities and conditions of equality in the political, economic, social, cultural and civil spheres.

2. Promote a real transformation towards a parity model with respect to power relations and dynamics of political parties and organizations. They must create the appropriate conditions in their three dimensions - organizational, electoral and programmatic - but also financially, so the political environment will no longer act as a bottleneck for women’s political empowerment but instead become the platform to drive and defend it.

3. Promote parity as a decision-making method in all State powers (legislative, judicial and executive) throughout the entire State structure, with vertical and horizontal criteria, as well as its gradual transfer throughout society.

The Advocacy Framework and the concept of parity democracy that it promotes have had an impact throughout the region and served as a tool to advance the active participation of women in decision-making spaces, resulting in the adoption of legal measures for parity in eight countries in the region (Argentina, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Mexico, Honduras and Panama).

UN Women provided technical assistance to gender commissions and/or women’s coalitions in the development of proposed bills, feeding legislative debates on parity in Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. In Colombia, UN Women developed a strategic alliance with UNDP, the Ministry of Interior, the National Civil Registry and the National Electoral Commission through the national campaign “More Women, More Democracy”, an initiative that aimed to promote the leadership, inclusion and political participation of women in the framework of the regional and national elections of 2017.

In Mexico, the nine political parties participating in the run-up to the 2018 elections signed a protocol to address political violence against women within their party structures. This was achieved by adhering to five commitments related to the eradication of violence in the political sphere and through UN Women’s HeforShe platform. UN Women followed up on the commitments assumed, in close collaboration with the country’s National Electoral Institute.

As a result of this election process, Mexico registered advances in the participation of women in its governing bodies, particularly in the legislature with virtual parity in both houses (48.2% of women in Congress and 49.2% in the Senate), as previously mentioned.

In Brazil, which also held general elections in 2018, women increased their participation in the lower house to 15%. Of the 77 female
legislators elected, 13 are black, and an indigenous legislator was elected for the first time in the country's history. On the other hand, the participation of women in the Senate remained at 13%.

UN Women contributed to these results through the comprehensive advocacy strategy “Brazil 50-50”, which included alliances with key partners from various sectors. UN Women also launched a digital platform for candidates committed to parity democracy and a national survey with the Ibope pollster, among other advocacy actions.

As a result of the National Meeting of Women held in October 2018, Bolivia adopted the National Depatriarchalization Agenda. This agenda is organized around a classification of seven types of women's rights: political, economic, social, cultural and identity; access to justice; prevention and punishment of all forms of violence; information and communication; and lastly, the rights of young women. It also identifies key challenges for the advancement of women: the incorporation of the Depatriarchalization Agenda in the Economic and Social Development Plan (PDES), the Patriotic Agenda 2025, territorial development plans and local development plans; the accounting of the economic contribution of women in the General Budget of the Nation; periodic and systematic time-use surveys; and the promulgation of the Law on Sexual and Reproductive Rights, among other relevant issues.

In partnership with the Plurinational Legislative Assembly, the Ministry of Justice and the Association of Female Councilors of Bolivia (ACOBOL), UN Women contributed to the organization and implementation of the nine departmental and national meetings (one per department) in preparation for the National Meeting. It advocated for the mainstreaming of international norms for women's equality and empowerment, particularly SDG 5, in the National Depatriarchalization Agenda; facilitated preparatory and planning meetings with numerous governmental and civil society organizations; and financed three consultations for the systematization of departmental and national proposals and for information and data on advances in women's rights. As a result, central issues of the 2030 Agenda and SDG 5, such as harassment and political violence, the wage gap and the strengthening of the gender mechanism, were incorporated in the Depatriarchalization Agenda.

The National Meeting of Women presented its agenda to President Morales, who, in response, announced the creation of the Plurinational Service for Women and Depatriarchalization and the Legal Social Office for Children and Women, which began their sessions on March 8, 2019, with the mission to end all forms of violence and discrimination.

Combating and eradicating violence and harassment against women in the political sphere remains one of the significant challenges of the region, since it implies a persistent barrier to the exercise of women's political rights through practices of direct violence - of more explicit and repressive character - and indirect violence - of a structural nature and linked to the hostility that women's participation in the political-electoral dynamic represents.

A paradigmatic example in this discussion is Bolivia, the first country in the world to pass a law against political violence, an initiative that is also currently under discussion in Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru.
Although we referred to the ATEANA project in the second section of this report, it bears mentioning in this context given its relevance, as well as its complementarity with the Advocacy Framework in the consolidation of parity democracy: ATENEA provides an index for women’s political participation and proposes a mechanism to promote it, and the Advocacy Framework creates the ideal legal framework to achieve it.

7.4. ORGANIZATIONAL EMPOWERMENT

In the same way that the path towards global sustainable development implies focusing efforts on women and girls – who represent a majority of those being left behind – it will take a similar effort in Latin America and the Caribbean with traditionally marginalized groups: Afrodescendants and indigenous people. Once again, we find it challenging to cover the breadth and diversity of the region. The situation of Afro women in the English-speaking Caribbean islands, where the population is mostly of African descent, can hardly be compared to that of their peers in Colombia or Brazil, where people of African descent are not a majority. The situation of indigenous women in Nicaragua or Argentina differs significantly from that of indigenous women in Bolivia or Ecuador, although, in all the examples mentioned, women are more disadvantaged than their male peers. Therefore, indigenous and Afro-descendent women are a priority for UN Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

With indigenous women, UN Women’s regional strategy focuses on strengthening leadership, as illustrated by the work carried out in Bolivia and Chile during 2018. In Bolivia, the capacities of 300 women leaders from different regions of the country were strengthened. This training process resulted in the development and approval of “departmental political agendas”, which established the advocacy issues for 2019 and generated 15 local initiatives against harassment and political violence. In the case of Chile, with the financial support of the Canadian mining company Teck, a leadership school for indigenous women was created in Northern Chile.

Another example of this strategy to strengthen leadership among indigenous women is the support provided by UN Women in Brazil. The work carried out facilitated linkages in the international sphere, supporting their participation in events or encouraging meetings such as the Meeting of Indigenous Women’s Networks, held in Brazil in 2016 and representing women from 105 indigenous nations of Brazil. In addition, the project “Voz das Mulheres Indígenas”, implemented by UN Women in cooperation with the Norwegian Embassy in Brazil, has been instrumental in strengthening these leaderships, as well as involving new generations of indigenous youth. In the 2018 election, two women linked to the project ran for vice president and senator.

This same strategy led to the organization of the First Indigenous Summit of the Americas for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), convened by the Chirapac organization in Lima, Peru in November 2018; and to a regional consultation with 10 indigenous leaders to collect inputs for the preparatory meeting of Latin America and the Caribbean prior to the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62). As a result of that consultation, the Declaration of Santo Domingo, adopted by the region in February 2018 as a common position prior
to the CSW62, echoed the specific concerns and proposals of indigenous women. These advocacy efforts are part of the work of the regional inter-agency group on indigenous peoples, currently co-led by UN Women and the ILO. In 2018, this group developed regional studies on indigenous peoples and sustainable development and access of indigenous women to land, territory and natural resources in Latin America and the Caribbean, to support United Nations country teams to implement concrete actions in favour of these persons which have been historically marginalized.

In the same way, within the framework of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), the UN Women Regional Office of the Americas and the Caribbean created a working group of and about women of African descent in 2016. The group’s first task was to develop a strategy to prioritize women of African descent in the regional work of the organization and support the governments of the region in fulfilling their obligations to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance faced by women of African descent, as well as to promote their empowerment and the realization of their rights.

The strategy distinguishes general areas of intervention for all women of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as other specific areas, for example, women of African descent affected by the conflict in Colombia, Brazilians of African descent living in the favelas of large cities, or migrants and descendants of Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic. It then links the proposed actions to national strategies for the fulfillment of the SDGs and to the inter-agency work of the United Nations.
DOROTEA WILSON
The Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women
Nicaragua

Dorotea Wilson was born in Puerto Cabezas on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua and has a Master’s Degree in Gender and Development from the Universidad Centroamericana UCA. During her long career as a militant for the rights of Afro-descendent and Caribbean women, she has worked with, among other organizations, Voces Caribeñas, a women’s movement that drove gender-based municipal policies on the Caribbean Coast; she also co-founded the Nicaragua Women’s Forum and founded Grupo Cultural Negro. Her activism against racism led her to establish the Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women in 1992, as an articulation space for black women’s movement in Latin America and the Caribbean formed by more than 400 women and organizations from 30 countries of the region. This network promotes the Political Platform of Afro-descendent Women Leaders on the occasion of the International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024.

1. How do you assess the situation of women of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean? Can we talk about advances in recent years?

Despite the advances made by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, inequality between social groups attributed to ethnic-racial and gender issues continues to be a distinctive feature of the region, particularly affecting women of African descent. These women remain invisible as subjects of differentiated policies, experience levels of poverty that are usually higher than the rest of the population, are underrepresented or absent in the decision-making processes, and are most vulnerable in terms of their rights and those of their communities to live a life free of violence.

The intersectionality of gender, race, ethnicity and class demonstrated lower values in many social indicators for Afro-descendent and indigenous women, revealing that belonging to such groups could be even more of a decisive factor in the situation of inequality than being a woman.

It can be said that the discrimination experienced by women of African descent is not merely a sum of discriminations but rather consist of the confluence of various factors that are enhanced by simultaneously experiencing racism and sexism.

2. Increasing the visibility of the situation of women of African descent involves generating relevant data. What challenges does this present?
The region has shown significant advances in generating disaggregated data on ethnic-racial groups, but it is still insufficient to be able to generate information and knowledge.

In 2020, the new census round begins. It is essential that States incorporate the “Afro-descendent” variable and include the formulation of ethnic-racial self-identification questions in a prior consultation process in order to generate information about this population, understanding that this constitutes a fundamental tool for the promotion of their rights and for the design and monitoring of policies and actions aimed at closing the gaps in the enjoyment of their rights.

3. What are the main work areas of the Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women?

In the Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women, we have been building our own history throughout the region since 1992. This Network was created as an articulation space for black women's movements from Latin America and the Caribbean. It is a political instrument for reflection, exchange, complaint and proposal for the development of women of African descent and the implementation of joint actions based on dialogue and cooperation with other sectors and social actors.

The Network’s political agenda is undergoing a significant maturing process, with actions in areas that are critical to furthering women’s empowerment. It is necessary to advance awareness of the human rights violations of women of African descent and the construction of affirmative policies for the economic autonomy of women, their political participation, entrepreneurship and promotion of creativity and artistic skills that project and strengthen African identity in the region.

In addition, it is essential to promote new leaderships that expand the participation of members in new spaces, assume representation responsibilities, and integrate delegations and missions.

4. Violence against women is a global and of course, regional problem. The Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women has insisted that violence should also be approached from a perspective of intersectionality.

Gender-based violence against women of African descent has racial characteristics. Unfortunately, information on the violence experienced by people of African descent, particularly women and young people, is still very limited in the region; health and justice records do not include variables to identify African descent, nor do specific surveys on violence allow for self-identification of these people.

School is another space where violence is exercised in the form of discrimination and exclusion. In schools, there is harassment, teasing and humiliation conditioned by ethnic-racial identity. These actions make girls of African descent feel inferior. It is very common for a female child victim of violence to be unhappy with her appearance and ask
Women of African descent are victims of multiple forms of violence. As the Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women states in its Political Platform of Afro-descendent Women Leaders: “... Afrodescendants have demonstrated the effects of racism on women in public policies; in the racial character of violence against women, from demonstrating the stereotyped image of their bodies in the media where they appear hyper-eroticized, or in sexualized roles as servants, to the daily violence in the public sphere carried out by the police forces.”

5. The Network has also promoted an Observatory to monitor the advances and compliance of States towards the objectives and intentions of the International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024. Can you address this experience?

Correct. After the first Summit of Afro-descendent Women Leaders held in 2015, the online Observatory was created as a monitoring and evaluation system for the compliance by Latin American and Caribbean States and governments of the Political Platform of Afro-descendent Women Leaders of the Americas, to ensure that the objectives and intentions of the International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024 effectively translate into an improvement in our quality of life and the exercise of all our rights.

In 2016, the observatory began in eight countries: Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Uruguay. During 2017, three more were incorporated: Bolivia, Ecuador and Mexico. Currently, 11 of the 22 countries that approved the Platform have been systematically monitoring 14 of the 17 thematic areas and 50 of the 71 demands during the period between July 2015 and July 2018.

With the efforts and results of our dialogue, communication and advocacy processes, and with the experience and findings that we have registered, we want to continue to take advantage of opportunities to share the experiences, assessments and lessons learned, in order to strengthen our regional impact during the first half of this important decade.

In countries that have been implementing public policies to reduce ethnic-racial and gender gaps, positive effects have been achieved that contribute to alleviating the situation of poverty of these populations. With this and other efforts, we will continue to bet on a near future without racism, discrimination or any other form of violence.

The pledge of the SDGs is to “leave no one behind”. This implies that States must work to eliminate the gaps that affect women of African descent. That by 2030, no woman of African descent is left behind!
FINAL CONSIDERATIONS
One of the central elements of the UNIFEM legacy in Latin America and the Caribbean is the close link that UN Women maintains with national women’s movements articulated in associations, groups, NGOs, international networks, etc. and, more recently, in cross-party legislative groups, business associations, associations of artists and scientists, among others.

As in most of the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean, the impetus for changes for gender equality ultimately lies in the strength of feminist and women’s movements. These movements are the starting point and, in many ways, provide the often-critical support to national mechanisms for the advancement of women, present today in the vast majority of countries in the region.

The work of international organizations and multilateral institutions is, to a large extent, focused on providing technical, political and financial support to the demands that organized women have been able to articulate before governments to convert them, when successful, into public policies adopted by the States.

This clarity and unity of purpose do not stem from a political agenda dictated or imposed by anyone; it arises from the inequalities, inequities, disadvantages and injustices that women and girls experience in Latin America, the Caribbean and the world. But, as expected, given the enormous ethnic, cultural and social diversity of the Latin American and Caribbean region, the inequalities, asymmetries and disadvantages are not the same for all women.

With a view to leave no woman or girl behind in Latin America and the Caribbean, and thus fulfilling the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is essential to intensify efforts to realize the rights of those who are currently behind.

In societies that inherit colonial regimes based on the plundering and spoiling of native populations and the slavery of Africans brought to the New World, and are then built on ethnic and racial discrimination, these populations are still lagging behind in almost all aspects, and their women and girls experience the additional disadvantage of their gender status.

In order to achieve the goal of leaving no one behind in Latin America and the Caribbean, it will therefore be necessary to undertake even greater efforts with the women and girls of indigenous and Afro-descendent populations. Women are the majority, but in many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, indigenous and Afro-descendent women are not. As such, the support and solidarity of other women is essential to strengthen their claims and demands before political institutions towards greater equality.
Not only the governments of the region, but also many of the women’s movements in Latin America and the Caribbean, have a pending debt to these women. Perhaps focused on their specific claims and demands, they have not been able to hear their voices or stand in full solidarity with their needs.

In addition, it is necessary to assume that the strengthening of the ultraconservative and fundamentalist movements, previously mentioned in this report, will not be a passing phenomenon. Their political expression and legislative coalitions have multiplied in strength in many countries of the region, and in some, they have also been able to influence the executive power. This situation is unsettling without a doubt but also challenging. Recent history has shown that the advancement of women’s equality is nothing more than overcoming one challenge after another. It is no different in this case.

Although there may be differences and nuances between the various expressions of this movement, its matrix is always anchored in the denial of the principle of citizenship based on equal rights for all (that is, also of women and men). This is why not only women’s organizations but other organized groups observe the growth of these movements with concern.

An illustrative and dramatic example of this is what happened in Guatemala in 2018, when various regressive initiatives against women’s rights were presented in Congress, particularly Law 5385, which annulled significant gains for women established twenty years prior in the Peace Accords signed to end the country’s armed conflict. Considering the widespread use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and the high degree of impunity (more than 95%) of these crimes, UN Women focused its efforts on stopping the adoption of this law, which would erode the minimum advances made and deteriorate women’s security in the country. The strategy proposed to achieve this ultimately proved effective. First, support was provided to women’s human rights organizations to prepare a common strategy; second, a media campaign was financed, which included press conferences and advertisements against Law 5385; and third, UN Women, together with the other UN agencies, produced a legal analysis of the legislation based on the international commitments assumed by the country, which was sent by the UN Resident Coordinator to the president of the Guatemalan Congress. Joint efforts were also carried out with civil society organizations to lobby legislators from the Justice Sector Reform Commission to persuade them of the negative effects of the initiative. UN Women also contacted several high-level public authorities, including the Supreme Court, the Ombudsman and the Prosecutor’s Office, among others, expressing its opposition to this reform. In addition, UN Women urged regional organizations such as the Organization of American States and the Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women to rule publicly against the initiative. Following numerous efforts, the initiative was finally withdrawn in June 2018. A similar situation occurred in the neighbouring country of Honduras, where a new draft Criminal Code submitted to legislative discussion in 2017 omitted the figure of femicide/feminicide (which had been included in the Code to date).
Here, the intervention of UN Women and other organizations was also decisive to prevent exclusion of this crime from the new Penal Code approved in 2018.

This is the first time that we find ourselves obliged to present standing our ground as an achievement, which highlights the political tension that women’s rights and the advancement of gender equality generate in Latin America and the Caribbean today.

If in Latin America and the Caribbean women have pushed their own agenda of demands forward, their interests coincide with those of many other sectors of political society working to defend democratic principles and values. Therefore, it appears that it is now necessary to forge tactical alliances for equality.

In addition, we must reiterate what has been stated in other sections of this report: the reduction of the gaps between women and men is a cross-cutting theme in addressing almost all the great global challenges of our time - from climate change to poverty reduction or the response to growing human mobility and the risks that it entails for women and girls. This requires not only political will that translates into public policies but also cultural and attitude changes. Both spheres – the political and the customary - overlap: a change in one usually produces or accelerates changes in the other. And these changes are occurring more slowly than desired and needed, but they are undoubtedly visible all over the world. Latin America and the Caribbean is no exception. Although the region continues to demonstrate high rates of violence against women, it shows significant achievements in other areas, including the political participation of women and the substantive participation of women in the process that culminated in the signing of the Peace Agreements in Colombia. However, we must reiterate the warning with which we introduced this report about the impossible task of generalizing something in a region as vast and diverse as Latin America and the Caribbean.

The issue of violence against women persists as one of the great challenges. It is true that much progress has been made with regard to legislative issues and the registering of information, and awareness about the magnitude of the problem is undeniably more significant today than a few years ago, but none of these factors alone is enough to reverse the situation.

We know that the processes of cultural change are slow, but we also know that they are not inert, much less when they modify the existing power relations. Therefore, it will be necessary to carry out largescale education and prevention efforts in the youth population, including of course, young men.

Another relevant aspect to highlight in these brief final considerations is something mentioned at various points in this report: the synergistic or complementary nature of the different fronts on which UN Women focuses its efforts.

With regard to empowerment, for example, it seems evident that women’s greater political empowerment can contribute to their economic empowerment by passing laws and implementing policies to this end, but women’s economic empowerment can also contribute to their political empowerment by creating the conditions for their full participation in political life within and outside parties.
In this same vein, better knowledge management - including more and better data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity or age, etc. - can strengthen and enhance the arguments that support women’s claims and demands for equality. At the same time, women’s needs should include access to more and better data that raises awareness of their situation and strengthens their arguments, as is happening in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In this sense, the reading and fundamental intentions of the Strategic Note that guided the actions of UN Women over the last three years in Latin America and the Caribbean proved to be correct and effective. In addition, UN Women is deeply committed to the ongoing reform of the United Nations and to continued and increasing coordination with the other UN agencies, as noted in the preceding pages.

Today, we can say without a doubt that the region of Latin America and the Caribbean has registered advances towards the equality of women on all fronts over the last three years. We can also say, with the same level of certainty, that UN Women assumed its rightful role in driving these changes. Naturally, the credit is due first to women who, in each country and from different positions, presented their demands and urged governments and other institutions to initiate changes, assuming risks in some cases.

Therefore, in the face of frustration and discouragement, it is important to pause for a moment and consider the path travelled. More than 30 years passed between the foundation of the United Nations to the creation of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in 1976, and it took approximately 30 more years for the original Fund to become UN Women, with its current status within the United Nations.

Over the past decades, the situation of women and girls has made impressive gains in the vast majority of countries in the world. That there is still much to do? That is undeniable. That not much has changed for a large number of women and girls compared to the women who came before them? Unfortunately not.

But none of these things contradicts the fundamental fact that, in recent decades, the women of the world have made giant strides towards gender equality, and that every step forward, however small, provides renewed energy for those steps that have yet to be taken.

There may be twists and turns, as we are witnessing today; it is possible that there are even transient setbacks. But the course is set. The change does not stop. And it has a girl’s face; it has a woman’s face. In Latin America and the Caribbean, UN Women will be there, with a compass and at full sail, accompanying and supporting the women’s movements that drive these changes and the democratic governments that assume and commit to them.
UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.