Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean

Annual report 2011

Women’s autonomy
From the margins to the mainstream

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
This document was prepared under the supervision of Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Work on this document was coordinated by Sonia Montaño, Chief of the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC. Particular thanks are owed to Nathalie Brisson-Lamaute, Coral Calderón, Luis González, Virginia Guzmán, Vivian Milosavljevic, Paulina Pavez, Adriana Raga, Corina Rodríguez and Alejandra Valdés for their substantive contributions.

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The authors would also like to express their appreciation for the inter-agency efforts of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB), the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the Department for the Planning and Evaluation of Policies for Development (DGPOLDE) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain.
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Foreword

The first report of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, entitled *What kind of State? What kind of equality?*, was presented at the eleventh session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. It discussed the advances made by the Governments of the countries of the region and the challenges they faced in seeking to respond to the persistent social and gender inequality experienced by women in their struggle to achieve economic autonomy and empowerment and to take decisions relating to material goods, family assets and income.

This, the second report of the Observatory, considers further advances and setbacks and the persistent problems relating to the lack of physical and economic autonomy; it focuses also on the adoption of decisions based on the agenda drawn up by regional consensus at the eleventh session of Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, in accordance with the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995). Special attention is paid to State gender institutions and to the conditions under which the machineries for the advancement of women direct and coordinate gender equality policies within the framework of today’s challenges and in the light of their experience over the past 15 years.

The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean is the fruit of the effort of the inter-agency group made up of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) (which subsumed the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)); in establishing the Observatory, the inter-agency group worked in conjunction with the Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB), the Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development (AECID) and the General Directorate for Development Policy, Planning and Evaluation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain.

The analysis contained in this report is based on information available within the Gender Equality Observatory and represents an advance in the development of this tool and in the countries’ commitment to updating it.

This report was structured around the following questions: What is the extent of the advances made in each of the spheres of women’s autonomy? What are the pending challenges in terms of public policy, bearing in mind the linkages or splits between the three types of autonomy?
What role should the machineries for the advancement of women play in order to promote gender equality policies?

Part I examines the tensions and complexities involved in building gender equality indicators with emphasis on the challenge of giving a clearer expression to the region’s historical, political and territorial heterogeneity, bearing in mind the diversity of women across the region, the idea being to obtain a simple representation that is readily understood and easy to disseminate and use. Similarly, the relevance of the indicators and their explanatory value as an input for public policymaking are highlighted with reference to the differences between Latin America and the Caribbean and within each of these two subregions.

Part II draws attention to State gender institutions and examines the role of institutions responsible for gender equality policies. The challenges of capitalizing on gains towards achieving equality, such as the quota laws and legislation for eliminating violence against women, are considered within the framework of the capacities and resources of the machineries for the advancement of women.

The situation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean is reviewed. In addition, indicators are presented for Andorra, Portugal and Spain, whose women, while not part of the region, constitute a political community that shares similar experiences in terms of discrimination and practices of mutual cooperation and faces the same challenges.

Unresolved challenges and new issues are identified including the need to boost the capacity to collect and compile statistical information on the countries of the region. In terms of legislation, while there has been uneven progress in some areas, such as combating gender-based violence, steps must be taken to ensure guaranteed access to the rights enshrined in national constitutions and laws and in international instruments. Another challenge will be to orient government agendas towards recognizing caregiving and redistributing caregiving responsibilities between the family, the State, the business sector and non-profit-making or community organizations as well as between men and women within the home.

Lastly, in order to advance towards women’s political participation in the region, in terms of achieving representation and setting up a parity agenda, States must go beyond affirmative action and ensure that the principle of parity is embodied in their constitutional charters; accordingly, they must make additional financial, organizational and human resources available to guarantee that this principle is borne in mind when adopting decisions.

Alicia Bárcena
Executive Secretary
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
I. Women’s autonomy: a work in progress

A. Introduction

Women’s autonomy is the basis for the compilation of data by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean for the evaluation of progress towards, as well as obstacles and resistance to gender equality in the region. This work is driven by the conviction that progress is directly related to the advances women make in their public and private lives, as an indispensable prerequisite for guaranteeing the full exercise of their rights.

The concept of autonomy refers to people’s capacity to take free and informed decisions about their lives, enabling them to be and act in accordance with their own aspirations and desires, given a historical context that makes those possible. Today’s level of economic, technological and social development makes it possible to state that greater autonomy for women can be achieved. The material conditions in the region do not offer a reasonable explanation for inequality, maternal mortality, adolescent pregnancy, precarious employment, the distinctive concentration of unpaid domestic work in the hands of women, and much less gender-based violence. As has been said previously (United Nations, 1995; ECLAC, 2010a), inequality and, therefore, lack of autonomy are primarily the result of injustice, the poor distribution of power, income and time between men and women and the lack of recognition of women’s rights by the political and economic elites.

An analysis of the changes that have taken place in each sphere of autonomy (economic, decision-making and physical) shows that public policies are material and symbolic constructs. The changes show gaps between the autonomies, which are not developing at the same rate as they do not depend solely on the strength of the women’s social movement. Nevertheless, if the movement is not able to establish a political agenda, the process will be slower and more fragmented. Nor does progress on the autonomies depend exclusively on the importance attached by the current Government to plans for equality —although political will is indeed a determining factor— or available material resources, despite the relevance of knowledge, networks that give meaning to such knowledge, budgets and institutions (Montaño, 2010).

The results call into question the coherence between the Beijing agenda, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the consensuses adopted at the regional conferences on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the commitments undertaken in connection with the Millennium Development Goals and their implementation, which is
often at odds with approaches that do not recognize rights and that adopt handout approaches that perpetuate patriarchal biases.

Although there are multiple paths towards women’s autonomy, all of them must traverse the boundaries between public and private life if the cost of development is not to fall on women’s shoulders in the form of unpaid work. The countries that have managed to move forwards by making effective changes in women’s lives and that have strengthened comprehensively the exercise of their rights inside and outside the home and in economic, political and cultural life are also those that have made the most progress on development.

Women’s labour-market participation has contributed to the decline in fertility rates, which has, in turn, facilitated their access to the labour market. Education is also a factor in empowerment and poverty eradication. However, there are still large numbers of poor women and even educated women continue to earn less than their male peers. The increase in political participation has changed the democratic landscape, but even those who do reach the highest levels of representation still face glass ceilings or cultural or financial barriers that prevent them from exercising their political citizenship with greater Independence and resources.

A healthy life free from violence goes hand in hand with educational and cultural changes. Also, when women have their own income, even if it is small, they are better able to cope with violence, while those who depend economically on their aggressor face greater difficulties. Nevertheless, many women with an income, stable employment and even high levels of education die at the hands of their partners or former partners, exposing the darkest side of discrimination, which leaves its mark on daily life: fear.

**B. Physical autonomy**

Physical autonomy is the freedom to make decisions regarding sexuality, reproduction and the right to live a life free from violence. The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean has taken four indicators that show that there is still much hard work to be done before women are able to decide and choose freely on matters relating to their bodies and sexuality.

- The number of women killed by their current or former intimate partner: women aged over 15 who are killed by their partner or former partner: absolute number and rate per 100,000 inhabitants.
- Maternal mortality: maternal deaths per 100,000 live births
- Teenage maternity: percentage of girls aged 15 to 19 years who are mothers.
- Unmet demand for family planning: percentage of women in couples who do not want any more children or who would like to delay the birth of their next child but are not using a family planning method.

The achievements are partial and vary greatly by country. The persistence of violence against women, the increase in adolescent maternity, and the fact that maternal mortality is still high are evidence of the need to take more determined action in this connection. However, it should be recognized that over the last 15 years the governments of the region have stepped up their response to these phenomena and there has been significant progress in the legislation relating to women’s physical autonomy. Comprehensive laws have been passed in the field of sexual and reproductive health, new legislation on violence against women has been adopted and
some countries, such as Costa Rica (2007), Chile (2010), El Salvador (2010), Guatemala (2008) and Mexico (2007) have defined the offence of femicide.³

The implementation of these legislative advances has not been easy: “There are clear problems when it comes to exercising the equal rights that are supposed to be guaranteed by constitutions, laws and international instruments. This deficit has a serious impact on women’s autonomy and the conditions of their daily lives” (IACHR, 2007).

1. Women’s deaths at the hands of their intimate partner or former partner

The deaths of women at the hands of their intimate partner or former partner are the clearest expression of discrimination and violence. Dying by the hands of the person who is supposed to provide protection, affection and care is a dramatic reflection of a lack of any form of autonomy. Femicide and the other forms of gender-based violence inflicted on women’s bodies, chipping away at their integrity and physical autonomy, are connected to infringements of their right to a healthy sexuality, in particular with regard to reproduction.

### BOX I.1

**THE MAGNITUDE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

In 2009, on the basis of data provided by seven countries, the deaths of 329 women at the hands of their intimate partners or former partners were recorded (117 in Peru, 79 in the Dominican Republic, 52 in Chile, 27 in Paraguay, 20 in Uruguay, 20 in El Salvador and 14 in Costa Rica). In the Caribbean, there are data only for Trinidad and Tobago and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, with the number of victims standing at seven and two women, respectively.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of data processed from information provided by official national sources.

Note: The magnitude of this phenomenon in the countries of the region varies greatly and while a rate per 100,000 inhabitants can be calculated for the countries in Latin America, that is not possible for the countries in the Caribbean as often the total population of those countries does not surpass 100,000 inhabitants and the data on femicide therefore has to be expressed in absolute numbers.

As to other forms of violence against women, the large majority of countries collect some form of administrative data in the services that receive victims’ complaints, but few make the information public and even fewer organize unified registers that make it possible to follow up on cases through to their legal outcome. Two worthy exceptions are the Government of Belize, which is championing a single registration form, and the Government of Colombia, which carries out a broad dissemination of official data on sexual offences and domestic violence on an annual basis.

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¹ In Costa Rica (2007) and Chile (2010), femicide is defined as an offence in the legislation on violence as the violent death of a woman perpetrated by her spouse, partner in a de facto union (whether or not that union is declared) or by a former partner. In Guatemala (2008), the law refers to all cases of women’s violent deaths involving an unequal power relationship, which includes marriage and cohabiting. The legislation on femicide in Mexico, which has been in force since 2007, and in El Salvador, where legislation was enacted in 2010 (it will come into effect in 2012), use the same definition of femicide: an extreme form of gender-based violence against women, resulting from the violation of their human rights in the public and private spheres, comprising a series of misogynist behaviours that may be met with social and State impunity and may culminate in femicide (El Salvador), homicide (Mexico), or other forms of violent death among women. Both of these laws are similar in scope to the Guatemalan legislation.

² Femicide has been penalized in Costa Rica (Act No. 8,589/2007, art. 21), Chile (Act No. 20,480/2010), El Salvador (Decree No. 520/2011), Guatemala (Decree No. 22/2008, art. 6) and Mexico (General Act on Women’s Access to a Life Free from Violence, 2007). Spain has Organization Act No. 1 on Comprehensive Protection Measures against Gender-based Violence, 2004.
### TABLE I.1

**LATIN AMERICA, THE CARIBBEAN AND THE IBERIAN PENINSULA: NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WITH LEGISLATION ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, BY LANDMARK IN THE WOMEN’S RIGHTS AGENDA**

*(In numbers)*

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<td><strong>First generation of legislation protecting against domestic violence</strong></td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td><strong>Legislation establishing femicide as a criminal offence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legislation on offences against sexual freedom</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Legislation against sexual harassment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>RATIFICATION</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>12</td>
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Source: Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.
See Annex 3 for more details.
* a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
FIGURE I.1
LATIN AMERICA, SPAIN AND THE CARIBBEAN: WOMEN’S DEATHS AT THE HANDS OF THEIR INTIMATE PARTNER OR FORMER PARTNER, 2009
(Rates)

A. LATIN AMERICA AND SPAIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rate per 100,000 inhabitants</th>
<th>Absolute number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of data processed from information provided by national official sources.

B. THE CARIBBEAN

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rate per 100,000 inhabitants</th>
<th>Absolute number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of data processed from information provided by national official sources.
### BOX 1.2

**PERU SHINES THE SPOTLIGHT ON FEMICIDE**

The aim of the femicide register of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Peru is to record how many women die as a result of gender-based violence with a view to preventing such deaths through the adoption of measures to ensure the effective application of the Domestic Violence Act. One element of note is that the register is the responsibility of the institution of the justice system responsible for providing protection measures for victims.

The register is considered an example of good practice in the production of statistical information on violence for the following reasons, among others:

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<td><strong>a)</strong> Legal framework. The register links the constitutional obligations of the Public Prosecutor’s Office to the fight against femicide as the Public Prosecutor’s Office is responsible for running the investigation into the offence from the beginning and for bringing criminal proceedings. The prosecutors must announce the immediate protection measures required by the situation within 48 hours. Furthermore, the Public Prosecutor’s Office is the entity responsible for keeping a record of cases of domestic violence.</td>
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<td><strong>b)</strong> Capacity-building. The Public Prosecutor’s Office raises the awareness of, trains and informs public prosecutors on femicide and the characteristics of this type of homicide.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>c)</strong> Diagnosis. The register gives a clear picture of the number of victims and creates the conditions to be able to evaluate the problem and take policy decisions. The Criminal Observatory reviews the national and regional media every day to see if any violent deaths of women are reported that have not been recorded by a public prosecutor. If so, the Criminal Observatory contacts the relevant public prosecutor to request the submission of information about the death.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>d)</strong> Cross-cutting. The register establishes the connection between domestic violence and femicide, and makes it possible to take measures through interventions by the public prosecutor’s office for family affairs, criminal affairs or those that deal with both matters, including the supervision of police action. In addition, the scope for action will be widened through the introduction of a computerized registration system.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>e)</strong> Replicability. This experience could be reproduced by public prosecutor’s offices elsewhere in the region, which have similar powers as the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Peru with respect to oversight of a femicide register.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Rocio Villanueva, “El registro de feminicidio en el Ministerio Público del Perú”, document presented at the International meeting on good practices in public policy for the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mujer y desarrollo series, No. 104 (LC/L.3231-P), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), July 2010. United Nations publication, Sales No. S.10.II.G.34.

Note: This practice is backed by ECLAC, through a cooperation agreement, with a view to creating a basis for replicating this model through technical assistance and horizontal cooperation between countries in the region.

The adoption of the Belém do Pará Convention in 1994 consolidated, in legal terms, the process of recognizing violence against women as a public problem (ECLAC, 2009).
of violence in the domestic or private sphere has taken place much more quickly than the recognition of violence in the public sphere, such as sexual offences. However, in all cases access to justice is difficult and slow, which is why ending impunity is one of the main focuses of the Secretary-General’s campaign “Unite to End Violence against Women”.

BOX I.3
FEMICIDE IN SPAIN

In 2009, 55 women died in Spain as a result of gender-based violence and in 2008 that number was 75. Although some changes have been achieved through legislation and public campaigns, as well as a good, long-standing registration system, these have not led to a significant drop in the number of deaths, and the issue therefore remains worrying.

SOURCE: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of information from the Office of the Secretary of State for Equality, Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality of Spain.

2. Slow progress towards reducing maternal mortality

The fifth Millennium Development Goal is dedicated to improving maternal health and one of its targets is to reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio. Even though the maternal mortality rates in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are not the highest when compared with the rest of the developing world, they still give cause for concern for governments, international organizations, civil society and the women’s movement. Reducing those rates represents a challenge and requires an international commitment.

According to the World Health Organization, the indicator on maternal mortality is the most sensitive to socio-economic differences (Langer and Nigenda, 2000). Direct and indirect causes of
maternal mortality include conditions relating to pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium. The four main causes are severe bleeding (generally puerperal), infections (septicaemia in most cases), hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (generally eclampsia) and obstructed labour and complications arising from unsafe abortions, carried out in risky conditions because this medical practice is illegal in most of the countries analysed. Indirect causes include diseases that lead to complications in pregnancy or that are aggravated by pregnancy, such as malaria, anaemia, HIV/AIDS and cardiovascular diseases.

Between 1990 and 2008 (the last year for which data are available) the maternal mortality ratio dropped from 156 to 88 deaths per 100,000 live births in Latin America (falling by 43.6%) and from 156 to 109 in the Caribbean (decreasing by 30%). On the Iberian peninsula, the decline is the result of the drastic reduction recorded in Portugal, from 15 to 7 deaths per 100,000 live births (a decrease of 53%). At first sight, the decline seems to be fast and encouraging in terms of meeting the target, but the reality is different. Some countries, such as Guyana, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Haiti, started from very high figures (310, 510 and 670, respectively), which are so far from the regional average as to be incomparable. In addition, the methodology is limited in that it does not allow for one country to be compared with another over different periods.

**FIGURE I.2**

LATIN AMERICA (20 COUNTRIES), THE CARIBBEAN (8 COUNTRIES) AND THE IBERIAN PENINSULA (2 COUNTRIES): MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO, 2008

(Per 100,000 live births)


Despite the reduction in maternal mortality, there is still some concern as to whether the target arising from discussions at the Millennium Assembly will be met.
BOX I.4
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ON NATIONAL HEALTH AGENDAS

As part of the decade of large United Nations conferences, the International Conference on Population and Development was held in Cairo in 1994 and it was the first time that a population conference had included the issues relating to reproductive health on its agenda, beyond the demographic component.

After Cairo and its Programme of Action, global interest in reproductive health policies and programmes increased. This led to the institutionalization of national reproductive and sexual health programmes, which were created in many countries in the region as a result of the encouragement and reflection following the Cairo Conference. The promotion of reproductive health and reproductive rights became part of the public policy agenda. The commitments undertaken first in Cairo and later in Beijing (1995) have been reiterated, every three years, at the regional conferences on women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In that connection, in the Lima Consensus (2000) —and reaffirmed at subsequent conferences— governments made a commitment to “Guarantee the protection of women’s human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, and address violations of these rights with particular attention to all forms of gender-based violence and its root causes, including the reproduction of a culture of violence” and to “Formulate and improve programmes designed to safeguard women’s health and uphold their sexual and reproductive rights in accordance with the provisions adopted in Cairo at the International Conference on Population and Development and in Beijing at the Fourth World Conference on Women”.

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of information from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

3. Teenage maternity on the rise: a worrying reality

Between 25 and 108 of every 1,000 adolescents aged from 15 to 19 years are mothers in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The regional average is 66.4 and the figure is as high as 88.6 in Central America. The Turks and Caicos Islands have the lowest proportion of adolescent pregnancies and at the other end of the scale is Nicaragua, where almost 110 adolescent women in 1,000 are mothers. Although the proportion is lower in the Iberian peninsula, this phenomenon continues to be an indicator of the vulnerability of adolescent women, who sacrifice their future careers, miss out on educational opportunities and are more likely to slip into poverty and reproduce the same cycle.

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3 Figures on paternity are not available for any country, particularly in the case of adolescents. A significant obstacle to preparing statistics on fertility and paternity is the lack of processed and published quantitative data on paternity in general. This situation is in keeping with the invisibility of men’s fertility and their participation in the processes of sexual and reproductive health. The statistics on fertility are prepared using information on women younger than 20 years who have had live-born children, and on that basis an analysis of the fertility of adolescent men is built (Olavarría and Madrid, 2005).
It is worth highlighting that, although maternity indices in the region’s countries have trended downward in all other age groups, they continue to rise among adolescents aged from 15 to 19 years.

This rise is being seen in countries with different levels of economic development, educational levels and poverty rates, which reveals the complexity of the phenomenon and the multiplicity of factors that influence its development.

Maternal mortality and adolescent pregnancy are higher among women from poorer sectors of the population who have less access to education, information and sexual and reproductive health. At the same time, adolescent pregnancy is also a sign of the failure to encourage a cultural change since, even in countries where there is greater access to services and information, adolescent women get pregnant as a way of affirming their independence and setting up their own home. It also points to a lack of autonomy, in the sense that they are not putting up any resistance to gender role expectations. Adolescent women get pregnant because they cannot or do not want to impose limits on exercising their sexuality in a responsible manner. Young men are still the most likely to initiate sexual activity while being the least likely to take responsibility, which is also the result of poor-quality education.
BOX I.5

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ON THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

The conditions for the sexual and reproductive health of women are much better on the Iberian peninsula than in Latin America and the Caribbean. As shown in the figures below, the maternal mortality ratio is lower than 10 deaths per 100,000 live births and adolescent maternity is below 3%. However, as in Latin America and the Caribbean, the adolescent maternity rate is growing in Spain. The indicator, measured as a rate per 1,000 adolescents aged from 15 to 19 years, rose from 9.6 in 2001 to 13.3 in 2007. The opposite took place in Portugal with the indicator falling from 20.6 in 2001 to 17.7 in 2007; however the rate is still higher than in Spain.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL: MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO, 2008

(Per 100,000 live births)


SPAIN AND PORTUGAL: WOMEN AGED 15 TO 19 YEARS WHO ARE MOTHERS

(Percentages)

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of information from Spain: López A. and others (2005), Informe juventud en España 2004, Madrid, Instituto de la Juventud (INJUVE), table 1.49 (estimate). Portugal: Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Fertility and Family Survey (FFS) 1997; table 12, standard country tables.

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of data provided by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.
The absence of statistics and the lack of up-to-date data on this indicator also speak volumes, pointing to the challenge that still remains in connection with the imposition of gender policies relating to adolescents on the agenda of the countries of the region.

4. Towards greater reproductive control

Another of the indicators used by the Observatory to measure physical autonomy is unmet demand for family planning. Unmet demand is the percentage of women aged 15 to 49 years who are in couples (married or not) who do not want any more children or who would like to delay the birth of their next child but are not using a family planning method.

Unmet need for family planning and unwanted pregnancy are two sides of the same problem, and both should lead to the adoption of measures at this level and contribute to the implementation of strategies that aim to reduce inequities and that focus on the needs of the population who need it most: young women. Unwanted pregnancy is a more complicated category. Unwanted pregnancy estimates can be very high even when unmet demand for family planning is low. This shows that, although there is a certain link between the two factors, there is not necessarily an absolute correlation.

This indicator has gained greater importance within the framework of the health targets of the Millennium Development Goals; however there are still few countries in the region that collect information for this indicator via demographic and health surveys. Another fundamental indicator for understanding the dynamic of women’s autonomy, in particular that of young women, is men’s fertility and their reproductive behaviour.

In this connection unmet demand — that according to Bongaarts (1978) refers to the additional use of contraceptive methods required for fertility rates to coincide with women’s stated intentions— should include at least the following categories of women:

- Women of reproductive age (from 15 to 49 years), who are married or in a consensual union.
- Women who are not currently using any modern method of contraception, including male sterilization.
- Women who are not pregnant.
- Women who are not amenorrheic due to lactation, for example, or abstaining from sexual relations postpartum.
- Fertile women.
- Women who do not wish to have any more children (definitively they do not want any more children or they want to limit the number of children they have).
- Women who wish to delay the next birth by two years or more (who would not be happy if they got pregnant).
- Sexually active women (who have had sexual relations in the last four weeks), even if they do not have a regular partner.
- Women who do not plan to use a contraceptive method in the short term.

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4 In Colombia, for example, while unmet need for family planning is 6%, the percentage of unwanted pregnancies is greater than 50% of all pregnancies.
- Adolescents aged under 15 years who are sexually active\(^5\).
- Women who have been sterilized who could use additional methods for extra protection.

As shown in figure I.4, in Honduras and the Dominican Republic, 1 in 10 women aged between 15 and 49 years is unable to plan her pregnancies. In Nicaragua, that percentage rises to almost 15% of women of reproductive age.

**FIGURE I.4**

**LATIN AMERICA (10 COUNTRIES): UNMET DEMAND FOR FAMILY PLANNING**

*(Percentages)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year (if available)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia (Plur. State of)</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Some countries, such as the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Haiti, have improved their indicators on access to family planning over the last few years. At present, 2 out of 10 Bolivian women (adults) do not have access to family planning methods, while in 1998 a quarter of women who were married or in a union were in that situation.

By contrast, in Guatemala, unmet demand has risen to almost 33%, compared with 23.1% in 1998. In the rest of the countries, the trend looks favourable in terms of the possibilities that women have to exercise control over their own bodies. In that regard, the decline recorded in Paraguay stands out in particular (from 20% in 1998 to 6.6% at present).

The causes that explain the unmet demand for family planning (apart from it not being possible to implement the desired planning) include overly high demand for and insufficient supply of reproductive health services, lack of support from the partner and the costs associated with access to contraceptive methods.

In short, limited progress has been made in relation to the indicators of women’s physical autonomy, which should be analysed in the context of cultural resistance in that connection.

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\(^5\) Given that sex involving minors aged under 14 years is considered statutory rape in many contexts, it is important to establish the relationship between sexuality, pregnancy and violence in this group, and to campaign to raise the minimum legal age for sexual relations and marriage.
Physical autonomy is possibly the most complex challenge since, as shown in the most developed countries, it can be achieved only when policies manage to make timely, long-term and effective interventions at the family, school and community levels.

C. Economic autonomy

The sexual division of labour is at the heart of income inequality between men and women. According to cultural norms, women are expected to devote themselves mainly to domestic chores and care work —both tasks unpaid— while men are expected to give priority to paid work. However, the productive work of women is as old as society itself. Yet for female farmers, artisans, traders and manual workers of all types, work in the home continues to be an obligation which defines their status and value.

Women have entered the monetary economy en masse in the last 50 years, partly to meet pressing basic family needs and partly in response to a desire for independence, especially among educated women. Except where socio-economic level allows for hired help in the home —work that is generally carried out by other women— this typically means that women shoulder a double burden.

Two indicators are used in the Observatory to measure the economic autonomy of women:

- People without incomes of their own: percentage of the total female and male population aged 15 and above with no incomes of their own and who are not studying, in relation to the total female or male population aged 15 or over.

- Total work time (total number of hours per day: or week of paid and unpaid work), disaggregated by sex, among people aged 15 and above.

BOX I.6

THE LABOUR INTEGRATION OF WOMEN

The redistribution of total work (productive and reproductive, paid and unpaid) is still a long way away. Women’s labour rights, such as maternity leave and nursing rights, have suffered setbacks in recent decades and are not enjoyed by most female workers in the informal sector, agriculture or paid domestic work. The difficulties encountered in moving forward with mechanisms allowing care work to be redistributed, as an essential step in improving the labour integration of women and in turn their access to economic resources and control over those resources, reflect the deep-rooted views that still need to change to achieve such a transformation. Creative strategies need to be found based on the belief that improving the economic position of women will entail benefits for the economy and society.


1. Their own income, but not much

In market economies, the possibility of having one’s own income is vital and indicates a person’s level of autonomy. In households, the ultimate use of resources is in turn the result of decision-making processes among household members. Negotiating capacity in these processes depends on access to own resources and the relative level of these resources, as well as on the capacity to control them. In this sense, the indicator on the population with no income of their own disaggregated by sex gives a good indication of lack of economic autonomy.
In general, personal income is generated by paid work (wages and earnings in cash or in kind) carried out by workers, whether employed or self-employed, although income may also arise from the ownership of tangible or intangible assets. In addition, secondary income may arise from retirement and old-age pensions, benefits, family or other allowances, including transfers, whether conditional or between households (alimony and child support, other transfers of income from work or property). Remittances are also an important source of income.

A person’s income determines their capacity to acquire goods and services available in the market and is a useful starting point for analysing gender relations, that is, the socially constructed power relations between men and women. There is an odd combination of modern relations based on the market and family relations built on traditional values contrary to women working outside the home. Women having an income of their own is the measure of autonomy and cultural change.

### BOX I.7

**CONVENTION 189 OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO) CONCERNING DECENT WORK FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS**

On 16 June 2011, the 100th session of the International Labour Conference adopted the Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

The new ILO standards set out that the estimated 53 million domestic workers worldwide (83% of whom are women or girls looking after families and homes) shall have the same rights as other workers: a reasonable number of working hours, weekly rest of at least 24 consecutive hours, limited payments in kind, clear information on the terms and conditions of employment, and respect for basic labour rights and principles, such as freedom of association and collective bargaining.

The convention is a historic achievement, taking ILO standards into the informal economy for the first time, and it represents a hugely significant step forward in extending labour rights to women.


Around 2008, 31.6% of women in urban areas of Latin America had no income of their own, compared with only 10.6% of men. However, there are significant disparities between countries: whereas in the Plurinational State of Bolivia 36.6% of women had no income of their own, in Uruguay only 16.8% were in this situation.

In rural areas of Latin America, 43.9% of women have no income of their own, compared with 13.6% of men, and the disparities between countries are even greater in these areas. Whereas in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, 63% of rural women have no income of their own, in Guatemala the figure is 52%, but in both countries the situation is critical when compared with Uruguay, where only 29.5% of women in rural areas have no income of their own.

Women with no income of their own are classified as inactive in labour market statistics since they devote all their time to unpaid housework. The drop in the indicator measuring women with no income of their own is the result of their increased participation in the region’s labour markets, both urban and rural. In 2008, the average participation rate of women in urban areas was 52%, 10 percentage points higher than the average recorded in 1990 (ECLAC, 2010a), and the labour participation of women in rural areas also rose between 1990 and 2005 (FAO, 2010).

Between 1994 and 2008, the proportion of women with no income of their own fell in most countries in both urban and rural areas. This trend is partly explained by the rise in the number of women in the labour market, the increasing importance of fiscal transfers as a component of their
income and changes to social security systems, for example in Argentina, Chile, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay, which have started to grant non-contributory social security benefits to women who have been unable to obtain them through labour contributions.

FIGURE I.5
LATIN AMERICA (15 COUNTRIES, URBAN AREAS): PEOPLE WITHOUT INCOMES OF THEIR OWN BY SEX, AROUND 2008 a
(Percentages)

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.


In 2008, fiscal transfers accounted for 21.7% of total income (ECLAC, 2010a). In Mexico and Brazil, conditional transfer programmes 6 set the standard and are more extensive than in other countries in the region. Between 1994 and 1998, Mexico succeeded in lowering the proportion of women with no income of their own by more than 20 percentage points, while in Brazil, where more than 40% of women are in this situation, the indicator fell by 10 percentage points between 2002 and 2008, when the government rolled out its Bolsa Familia programme.

Conditional transfers help to reduce poverty and in turn the percentage of women with no income of their own. Most of the region’s countries have implemented this type of social programme 7.

6 The measures are the Opportunities Programme in Mexico and the Bolsa Familia programme in Brazil.
7 In the past decade, many governments in the region have implemented conditional transfer programmes granting women an income and giving them responsibility for receiving the transfers, including: Argentina (Heads of Household Programme, Families for Social Inclusion and Universal Child Benefit for Social Protection (AUH)), Brazil (Bolsa Familia), Colombia (Families in Action and the Network for Combating Extreme Poverty (JUNTOS)), the Dominican Republic (Solidarity Programme), Ecuador (Human Development Bonus), El Salvador (Solidarity in Rural Communities), Guatemala (Mi Familia Progresa), Jamaica (Programme for Advancement through Health and Education (PATH)), Mexico (Opportunities Programme), Panama (Opportunities Network), Paraguay (Tekoporâ) and Peru (Juntos) (ECLAC, n.d.).
Under these programmes, women are selected, in their role as mothers, to receive the benefits and assume responsibility for meeting the commitments related to the education and health of their children. In most cases, the programmes are effective in strengthening their negotiating capacity within the household, but it should be borne in mind that this method reinforces their role as caregiver (Veras Soares and Silva, 2010a and 2010b).

Remittances form part of women’s own income, especially in countries where people tend to migrate to Europe or the United States. The sending of remittances is becoming a key factor in the survival of many families in the country of origin. Moreover, the exportation of female labour creates global care chains, with these women constituting the precarious link in those chains.

**BOX I.8**

**THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN: RURAL WOMEN WITH THEIR OWN INCOME**

Despite the barriers inherent in productive systems, rural women are on the road to autonomy and in the last 20 years they have managed to break into paid work outside the home. Their presence in paid agricultural labour markets has been strengthened in several countries in the region, especially in seasonal work, and they have also penetrated the non-agricultural goods and services markets as independent workers.

As a result, women have contributed to a certain degree to the diversification of rural household types according to the main source of income. Based on the data available in 13 countries (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia), Ballara, Damianovic and Parada (2010) identify three major household groups according to source of labour income: (a) agricultural households (largely linked to the small farming economy), (b) non-agricultural households (including wage earners and the self-employed) and (c) mixed households (covering combinations of agricultural and non-agricultural activities, both local and non-local). The authors also indentify a fourth group: households receiving transfers. These households are the product of the implementation or extension of the coverage of public transfers (such as pensions and welfare transfers) and migration giving rise to the sending of remittances by migrant workers.

On average, rural women with their own income contribute between 23% (Colombia) and 36% (El Salvador) to total household income. The largest contributions are made by women in households receiving transfers followed by those in mixed households, while the smallest contributions are made by women in agricultural households.

If a value was attached to the unpaid productive work carried out by women in agricultural households that still have family workers, these women would make a larger contribution to total income. In any case, the contribution made by women to income in mixed households is no smaller, ranging from just short of 20% in Guatemala to 45% in El Salvador. If it were not for the still relatively low labour participation of women, linked to unpaid care work and the wage gaps to their detriment, rural women would make a relatively larger contribution to total household income in both mixed and non-agricultural households. Although their contribution in households receiving transfers ranges from 45% in Chile to 80% in Guatemala, welfarism and dependence on remittances are not a long-term solution to achieve greater autonomy.


8 The results reported by Veras Soares and Silva (2010a and 2010b) were prepared on the basis of information from the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.
Uruguay —the country with the lowest proportion of women with no income of their own— stands out for its social security reform and the broad coverage of its social security system for women aged 65 years and over (85.1% in 2007).

The Argentine Integrated Social Security System (SIPA), created by Act No. 26.428/2008, has a significant gender dimension given that 75% of the beneficiaries are women. The high participation of women is related to the measure implemented in 2006 allowing all persons aged 65 years without social security benefits —mainly women— to be included in the system.

In short, the total number of women without an income of their own is falling, owing mainly to the fact that women are carrying out paid work and because some have access to social security benefits (non-contributory or as compensation for years in which no contributions were made) or receive fiscal transfers under conditional transfer programmes. This results in a reduction in the number of women with no income of their own but does not solve the crucial challenge in tackling inequality: the right to decent work and employment.

BOX I.9
THE SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

The concept of sexual division of labour contributes to a clearer analysis of social roles clearly differentiated by sex. This division is considered to be a social construction —and hence changeable— which determines the main roles individuals must play in society: women supposedly in charge of social reproduction and men of production work. Above all, however, it sets up hierarchical power relations that force the majority of women to carry out work that has no visibility or social recognition, and this cultural matrix is reproduced in the public sphere where women occupy the most precarious and worst-paid jobs. The vicious cycle of inequality generated by the socially imposed obligation to perform domestic work, particularly care activities, largely explains women’s absence from politics and decision-making in general.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Women’s contribution to equality in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.2738(CRM.10/3)), Santiago, 2007.

2. Women working longer hours

The integration of women into the labour market has resulted in a significant extension of their working time since they keep up their family responsibilities whereas men devote themselves exclusively to paid work. Notwithstanding problems relating to international comparability, the latest time-use surveys conducted in the region confirm a common pattern, as shown in figure I.6.

The pattern is visible in both rural and urban areas, with women in rural areas devoting more hours each week to unpaid domestic work in almost every case. This could be the result of entrenched tradition, with higher fertility rates and the lack of access to basic social services among rural households.

The double burden means that women have less time available for paid work and therefore a smaller monetary income, including in Mexico, where men participate more in reproductive activities. The time devoted to paid work by women is always less than by men in all countries mentioned and the gap is wider in rural areas.
FIGURE I.6
LATIN AMERICA (5 COUNTRIES): TOTAL WORKING TIME, PAID AND UNPAID, FOR THE POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER BY SEX AND AREA OF RESIDENCE
(Hours per week)

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special processing of time-use surveys or questions concerning the time devoted to paid and unpaid work each week in the following five countries: Brazil (2008), Colombia (2007), Ecuador (2008), Mexico (2009) and Uruguay (2007).

Note: Countries do not use the same classification of activities to define unpaid work. In addition, the data are not comparable because of differences in the type of questionnaire used and the methods applied to gather information. The results are shown more for illustrative purposes rather than for the purposes of comparison, in order to show similarities in the behaviour of men and women in the three variables analysed.

Time-use surveys show the gap in the activities carried out by men and women. No changes can be seen in people’s daily lives, not even in the countries where men participate more in domestic and care tasks. In addition, given the focus on mothers and children in legislation on pregnancy, gestation and lactation, it is understandable that men find themselves excluded from the care provider/receiver relationship. Shared responsibility has been enshrined at the normative level since 1981, through the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981, (No. 156) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), but it has yet to be realized. This is no coincidence when considering that less than half of the countries of Latin America and only one country in the Caribbean (Belize) have ratified the Convention. Despite the fact that 12 countries in Latin America have passed legislation establishing or extending paternity leave, the real scope of that legislation in employment systems characterized by informality is doubtful.

By contrast, in legislation on persons with disabilities, the State tends to be identified as the care provider and is responsible for creating institutions to address the issue.
The region now has in its favour the Statistical Conference of the Americas, an intergovernmental body that encourages the development of statistical activity in accordance with United Nations standards. Since 2007, the Conference has had a working group dedicated to developing gender statistics. Under the coordination of Mexico, the national statistical offices of the following countries have gradually joined the working group: Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

This group aims to promote the production, development and systematization of gender statistics and indicators, as well as their dissemination and use in public policies in all countries of the region. The group has played a significant role in encouraging collaboration between producers of information (statistical offices) and users (in particular bureaux and ministries for women’s affairs), and between strategic areas such as censuses, time-use surveys and surveys on violence against women (See [online] www.eclac.cl/scaeclac/aboutsca.htm). It has also drafted a proposal for a conceptual and methodological framework for time-use surveys in the countries of the region, which includes a classification of time-use activities in Latin America and the Caribbean (CAUTAL) (Gómez Luna and Sosa Márquez, 2010).

Initiatives on measuring time-use are an indispensable tool for measuring women’s total workload and, to date, 17 countries in Latin America (Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay) have carried out an independent initiative or have incorporated a question or a section on time use into their household surveys. In addition, Trinidad and Tobago included a question on time use in its last census.

The countries of the region, as well as the Iberian peninsula, also have the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, an inter-agency project coordinated by ECLAC (see [online] www.cepal.org/oig) in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB), the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the Department for the Planning and Evaluation of Policies for Development (DGPOLDE). The Observatory has become a useful tool, offering technical assistance, supporting governments in the creation of information systems with a gender perspective and promoting the use of the information that is available in the design and implementation of public policies.

During its tenth meeting (Havana, April 2011), the Statistical Conference of the Americas welcomed the preparation by the Working Group on Gender Statistics, coordinated by Mexico, of a proposal for a classification of time-use activities in Latin America and the Caribbean and invited countries to use this classification system and send their comments to the secretariat, with a view to improving this key tool for harmonizing the region’s time-use surveys (agreement 18). It also urged countries to redouble efforts to identify, enhance and systematize sources of information used to generate gender indicators, including those of the Gender Equality Observatory, and to periodically forward updated information on the Observatory indicators relating to the physical, economic and political empowerment of women (agreement 16).

In short, the cultural values that have a negative impact on progress towards equality are reproduced in the domestic sphere. Women continue to have a lower participation rate and a higher unemployment rate than men, and to suffer from horizontal and vertical segregation. Furthermore, women continue to spend less time on paid work on average than men (on a daily basis and over the life cycle) because of the weight of the traditional values that impose conditions on their joining the labour market and, when they do, because of their overrepresentation in precarious and poorly paid jobs.

D. Autonomy in decision-making

In the last five years, six women have been elected president in Latin America and the Caribbean. At present, a not inconsiderable 42% of the population of Latin America is being governed by a woman – a situation rarely seen before in history. But this is no coincidence. Twenty years have passed since the first legislation on quotas was passed in Argentina and several countries incorporated changes into their electoral codes. Thirteen Latin American countries have legislation establishing quotas and parity requirements for the registration of female candidates for election to national parliaments.\(^\text{10}\)

The idea, prevalent for a good part of the 20th century, that women were not capable of governing or taking decisions is now in the past. There are now political communities that have experienced and value the changes that women introduce through their participation in public office at the highest level, from the presidential to the local level, where slowly, but increasingly, women are taking on positions of power and leadership.

Affirmative action, such as legislation on quotas or parity, has been a characteristic of the democratic development of the region and has achieved a change in numbers and mentalities, two elements that constitute democratic culture.\(^\text{11}\) The battles won go far beyond rhetoric and, in several countries, the critical mass needed to influence policies and legislation has been reached. Apart from the women themselves, many men value the presence of women as protagonists in political institutions.

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\(^{10}\) Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

\(^{11}\) Parity occupies a predominant position in the debates on the enrichment of democracy. Unlike the quota, which is a temporary adjustment measure that aims to reduce the underrepresentation of women in politics, parity is a catalyst of de facto equality and is a definitive measure that seeks to ensure that political power is shared by men and women (INSTRAW/UNIFEM, 2010).
In recent years, the governments of the region have placed parity at the heart of the political agenda, as established in the Quito Consensus, which states: “to achieve equality in the exercise of power, in decision-making, in mechanisms of social and political participation and representation… constitutes a goal for the eradication of women’s structural exclusion” (CEPAL, 2007).

The Observatory calculates the following indicators of autonomy in decision-making:

- Executive power: percentage of women in ministerial cabinet positions
- Legislative power: percentage of women in the national legislative body
- Judicial power: percentage of women judges in the highest court or supreme court
- Local power: percentage of elected mayors who are female
- Local power: percentage of elected city council members who are female
- Countries that have signed and ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women\(^{12}\)
- Level within the Government hierarchy of national machineries for the advancement of women

1. **Women presidents make their mark**

In the region’s history, there have been 12 female presidents or heads of State or government, seven of whom have been elected in the last five years. The election by popular vote of several women to the position of president in the countries of the region since 2005 has marked a turning point in regional politics. That investiture, which symbolizes the highest office, of so many women at the same time should be seen as a historic achievement resulting from long years of feminist struggle, resistance to dictatorships, participation in peace processes and the adoption of parliamentary quota legislation. That is the backdrop against which these events should be interpreted. Symbolically, the most recent elections showed that women are no longer a virtual minority and have a real chance to exercise power.

Michelle Bachelet was elected president of Chile in 2006 and achieved an 84% approval rating during her term in office. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner has been President of Argentina since 2007, while Portia Simpson-Miller was elected the first female Prime Minister of Jamaica in 2006. In 2010, three women were elected to lead their countries: Laura Chinchilla and Dilma Rousseff as presidents of Costa Rica and Brazil, respectively, and Kamla Persad-Bissessar as Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

Over the last few years, there has been some debate on and an acceptance of parity democracy, which consists of a rethinking of the concept of representation as confined to ideological and territorial plurality alone: since the citizenry is made up of men and women, both should be represented in equal percentages in the political system. In this sense, parity is not simply a higher quota for women, but the broadest possible expression of universality (Montaño, 2007).

The opinion leaders consulted\(^{13}\) on the political participation of women maintained that in order for affirmative action, such as quotas, to work fully there must be synergies between a series of

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\(^{12}\) The information on the Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the level within the Government hierarchy of national machineries for the advancement of women can be found at [online] www.cepal.org/oig.

\(^{13}\) Between November 2010 and January 2011, ECLAC carried out a third consultation of opinion leaders in Latin America on women’s political participation and parity (the first two consultations were carried out in 2008 and 2009). This consultation is an important source of information on the opinions and perceptions of figures in the public and private domains in the region (academics, politicians, business people and leaders in the social and religious spheres), who were selected with the support of national experts, seeking a certain balance (including a gender balance). The consultation, carried out online, consisted of a questionnaire of closed questions (in Spanish and Portuguese) and received over 450 responses (ECLAC, 2011).
normative and cultural factors, including: compliance with the requirement on ranking women candidates on candidate rosters, the correct application of the sanctions established by law for non-compliance with quotas, access to financing for women and the political will of the parties to implement these measures\textsuperscript{14}. However, only six countries have established the ranking requirement for candidate lists and only 10 have explicitly defined a sanction for non-compliance\textsuperscript{15}.

One piece of good news is that affirmative action and parity have the support of the majority of the region’s opinion leaders. The results of the last survey of opinion leaders in Latin America on women’s political participation and parity (ECLAC, 2011) show that 64% of these leaders support quota legislation to promote the political participation of women.

Men are in favour of these laws (45%), but not to the same extent as women. Of those who support the quotas, most are against imposing sanctions on the parties that do not comply with the quotas or do not express an opinion in that regard. Two years ago, 73% of those surveyed were in favour of quota legislation, one year ago that figure was 56% and today it is 64%.

2. What has changed in the attitudes of opinion leaders

An interpretation of what has changed and what has remained constant in the attitudes of opinion leaders over the three consultations carried out between 2008 and 2010 clearly shows that their opinion on the benefits of women’s participation in politics has remained steady: the improvement in the representativity of the democratic system is making it possible to demonstrate women’s political capacity.

Opinion leaders recognize that affirmative action aiming to increase women’s political participation has had a significant visible effect in the democratic system, strengthening democracy and allowing the inclusion of women as new participants in decision-making. Contrary to certain media discourse, quota legislation does not promote confrontation between men and women or prevent male or female representatives from securing public or representative positions on their own merits.

Although support for imposing sanctions on parties that do not comply with the quotas established by law remains above 60%, it has fallen with each consultation: in 2008 it was 78%, then it fell to 63% and at present it stands at 67% (an overall drop of 11 percentage points).

A significant outcome from all three of the consultations was that the percentage of those surveyed in favour of measures for strengthening shared responsibility is on the rise: 76% of those surveyed in the first consultation, 81% in the second and 84% at present believe that the increased participation of men in household tasks should be encouraged.

3. Drivers of and obstacles to gender parity in politics

The majority of opinion leaders in the region, 66%, think that the greatest opposition to gender parity in politics comes from “within the main political parties”. This percentage is almost the same as that recorded in the previous consultation (67%). This does not mean that the parties formally oppose parity, for example, in their speeches or programmes, just that the main opposition to parity comes from “within them”. But not all parties are equal in this regard: three quarters of those surveyed

\textsuperscript{14} The requirement on ranking of women candidates on candidate rosters is one of the factors affecting whether these laws are effective. The aim of this requirement is to prevent parties from placing women at the bottom of the list, where they have no real chance of being elected. For example, the Argentine Quota Act (1991) requires that women make up a minimum of 30% of the candidates on the party list and that they be in positions from which it is possible for them to be elected.

\textsuperscript{15} Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia have this mechanism in place.
maintain that there are some or many differences between the parties. Those differences (for 62% of those surveyed) are essentially the result of “different conceptions or visions of society”. Religious factors seem to have very little relevance. The parties that typically describe themselves as “socially conservative” tend to be the main problem for these changes because, almost by definition, they value the traditional role of women.

Despite this opposition, attitudes towards affirmative action on parity seem to be increasingly favourable: 63% of those surveyed believe so. The main reason explaining this change is the influence of women’s social movements (according to 48% of those surveyed), followed by the elections context (22%), the example set by the election of women presidents (15%) and the agenda of international institutions (12%). Only 4% mention the agendas of political parties. Those surveyed saw the parties as harbouring the main opposition to gender parity and they did not consider them to be promoters of affirmative action.

4. Parity in ministerial cabinets

Parity in ministerial cabinets is as yet incipient. In 2010, Nicaragua, Grenada and Costa Rica had the highest proportion of women ministers in the region, with 56%, 55% and 45%, respectively, while in El Salvador, Uruguay and Mexico women held less than 15% of ministerial posts (see figure I.7). In general, the proportion of women in ministerial cabinets has not remained constant during the terms of office of the governments that appointed them or once that term of office is over.

![Figure I.7](image-url)

**FIGURE I.7**

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (33 COUNTRIES): WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN MINISTERIAL CABINETS DURING THE MOST RECENT TERM OF OFFICE, DECEMBER 2010**

(Percentages)

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of data processed from information provided by official national sources.
With regard to political autonomy, the countries of the Iberian peninsula are in a relatively consolidated position in terms of executive and legislative power. As shown in figure I.8, women hold about 30% of posts in ministerial cabinets in Andorra and Portugal, while in Spain that figure reaches 47.8%. Without doubt, the influence of the equality legislation has been a determining factor, which shows how relevant it is to have strong and overarching legal frameworks.
FIGURE I.9
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: WOMEN IN MINISTERIAL CABINETS
IN THE LAST THREE GOVERNMENTS, DECEMBER 2010
(Percentages)

A. LATIN AMERICA (20 COUNTRIES)\textsuperscript{a}

B. THE CARIBBEAN (13 COUNTRIES)\textsuperscript{b}

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of data processed from information provided by official national sources.
\textsuperscript{a} Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Puerto Rico and Uruguay.
\textsuperscript{b} Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.
Although women’s participation in the spheres of power is ever more frequent and increasingly resembles the situation in the political mainstream, it is not yet a consolidated process. Up to 2006, there was an uptrend in the proportion of female ministers in Latin America; today their presence is growing slowly and is concentrated, above all, in sociocultural issues (see figure I.10).

**FIGURE I.10**

LATIN AMERICA (20 COUNTRIES)*: DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN MINISTERS BY PORTFOLIO, MOST RECENT GOVERNMENT, DECEMBER 2010

(Percentages)

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of data processed from information provided by national official sources.

* Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Puerto Rico and Uruguay.

Both in the region and on the Iberian peninsula, women are much more commonly assigned to ministerial posts addressing social and cultural matters than political or economic affairs (see figure I.11). An analysis of the composition of the ministerial cabinets of a number of countries shows that only seven have women ministers for political and economic affairs: women hold 22% of such posts in Argentina, 16.7% in Chile and Colombia, 17.6% in Ecuador, 25% in Peru and 9.1% in Mexico. Spain, which is not represented in figure I.11, has a remarkable participation rate of 50% in economic affairs. The distribution of female ministers in Latin America reflects, above all, their involvement in sociocultural portfolios.
5. Women in parliament

The region has an average parliamentary representation of women of 23%. By comparison, in Europe, including the Nordic countries, women make up 22%.

The three consultations carried out by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean have shown that current opinion leaders are increasingly accepting of the presence of women in power and the citizenry has formed a democratic critical mass that votes for women, trusts them and recognizes this as a democratic act. The consultations carried out by the Observatory and other studies reflect that, both in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Iberian peninsula, the climate conducive to affirmative action has improved in the last five years.

The parity measures implemented in the electoral systems of 12 countries in Latin America vary with the minimum rate of representation ranging between 20% in Paraguay and 50% in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Costa Rica, Ecuador and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Parity legislation primarily refers to provisions that guarantee the nomination or enrolment of a minimum number of women on party or coalition lists. Compliance with the quota is determined by the gap between the percentage of women enrolled and the percentage defined as the legal quota. However, it is also possible to measure the gap shown by this measure in the effectiveness of its outcomes.

Figure I.12 shows that the process towards parity has led to positive outcomes. On average, the parliamentary representation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean is 23%, which shows a constant increase compared with the participation of women at the beginning of the 1990s (when parity legislation began to be introduced).
A key element in ensuring compliance with the quotas has been making them compulsory, requiring the ranking of female candidates on candidate lists and imposing sanctions for non-compliance. All of the countries in the region that have quota legislation have established regulations on alternating male and female candidates on the lists, while 10 of the 12 countries have incorporated changes into their electoral legislation to define sanctions for non-compliance and the institution responsible for imposing them (in general, the electoral bodies).

A look at the gap between the average registration of female candidates and the quotas for the most recent elections in the 12 countries confirms that relevant progress has been made towards achieving parity. Peru and Argentina surpassed their 30% minimum quota by 9 and 10 percentage points, respectively. Paraguay also surpassed the 20% quota established by law by 11 percentage points, while Mexico and the Dominican Republic are close to the established quota.

Four countries have set parity at 50%. Of those, Costa Rica and Ecuador are steps away from reaching the goal relating to registered female candidates, while the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are still far from reaching their targets, even though their results have improved since they introduced parity legislation (see figure I.13).

It is important to point out that the rulings of the electoral justice system, in the cases of Argentina and Costa Rica, among others, have made up part of the body of law that has made it possible to improve the conditions for the application of quotas in both countries\(^\text{16}\). This shows the increasing number of institutional actors involved, which, in turn, are boosting the political representation of women.

\(^{16}\) See the most relevant decisions of the Supreme Court of Elections of Costa Rica [online] www.cepal.org/cgi-bin/getprod.asp?xml=/oig/noticias/paginas/5/36135P36135.xml&xsl=/oig/tpl/p18l.xsl&base=/oig/tpl/top-bottom-decisiones.xsl.
FIGURE I.13
LATIN AMERICA (12 COUNTRIES): COMPLIANCE WITH THE QUOTA IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS, DECEMBER 2010 *
(Percentages)

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union; for the information on female candidates, Cecilia Schneider and others, “Estado de los sistemas de información estadística de los organismos electorales latinoamericanos desde una mirada de género. Informe final”, UN-Women, unpublished, 2011.

a Thirteen countries have set a legal quota or defined parity for posts allocated by popular vote in Latin America and the Caribbean. To date, 12 countries have implemented that legislation and Uruguay will bring it into force in 2014. Colombia, which is not represented in the figure, has a quota of 30% for senior management positions in the civil service.

Lastly, in some countries there has been a considerable reversal in the participation of women in the legislature. In the Bahamas, their participation fell from 20% in 2007 to 12.2% in 2010 and in Belize it went from a low representation of 6.7% in 2007 to no women representatives in 2010. Colombia, which in 2006 had reached a participation rate of 12.1% in the national legislature, now has a rate of only 8.4%.

TABLE I.3
LATIN AMERICA, THE CARIBBEAN AND THE IBERIAN PENINSULA: NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WITH QUOTA OR PARITY LEGISLATION AND PERCENTAGE ESTABLISHED BY THAT LEGISLATION a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of countries with quota or parity laws</th>
<th>Percentage quota established by the legislation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Caribbean</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iberian peninsula</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33-40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean [online] www.cepal.org/oig/.

a Includes 19 countries of the Caribbean, 20 countries of Latin America and 3 countries of the Iberian peninsula.

In the national parliaments of the countries of the Iberian peninsula, the rate of women’s participation is over 25% (in Andorra and Spain that figure is over 35%) (see figure III.14). This level
of participation in parliament by women seems to be a consolidated process in Spain, which has shown similar figures since the early 2000s. In Andorra and Portugal, by contrast, this level of participation is a more recent phenomenon, which has been consolidated over the last five years.

FIGURE L.14
IBERIAN PENINSULA: NATIONAL PARLIAMENT SEATS HELD BY WOMEN, 2010
(Percentages)

![Bar chart showing women's and men's participation in national parliament seats in Andorra, Spain, and Portugal.]

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of data processed from information provided by national official sources.

6. Local power

At 8%, women’s participation at the local government level remains low, although it has increased slightly in recent years.17

This paltry percentage is of great relevance when considering that a total of 24,430 municipalities elected authorities during the last electoral period in Latin America and three countries of the Caribbean. What is more, this reality shows that in this area of government, where decisions are taken on the fates of cities, the possibilities for accessing power are even further out of reach.

Although the situation is a little better at the level of local legislative councils, the goal of parity is still a long way off. On average, women make up 22.2% of legislative bodies at the local level in Latin America. Of the countries that have information on this indicator, in five countries the representation of women in local legislatures is no higher than 15%, in 12 countries the level of participation is between 15% and 30%, and in only two (Costa Rica and Trinidad and Tobago) do women hold more than 30% of the posts in local councils. The countries with a higher level of female participation in local councils are those which have taken some form of affirmative action to encourage their participation. However, this percentage falls far short of the goal of legal parity established through the quotas that apply to this level of government in 19 countries.

17 Apart from in three countries (Honduras, Jamaica and Panama), where the number of elected mayors who are women has declined.
7. Progress made in relation to judicial power in the Caribbean

In general, the majority of judges in the highest courts are men. The participation of women in judicial power shows that, on average, 19% of all posts in the highest courts of the region are held by women; in 9 countries women hold not more than 15% of posts, in 11 countries they represent between 15% and 30% of all posts, and in 14 countries they are close to attaining one third of posts in the highest judicial body (see figure I.16). The countries of the Caribbean are the exception: they are close to achieving parity, with women holding 50% of posts.\footnote{In the Caribbean, the highest court in six independent countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and three British overseas territories (Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and Montserrat) is the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, which applies a justice system based on common law and statutory law.}

In Colombia, there is quota legislation for administrative posts in the executive branch, which stipulates that 30% of senior decision-making positions must be held by women (Act no. 581 of 2000); however, that is not the case for the judicial branch where in 2009 only 17% of judges were women.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.
FIGURE I.16
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (33 COUNTRIES): WOMEN JUDGES
IN THE HIGHEST COURT, 2009
(Percentages)

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of data processed from information provided by national official sources.

BOX I.11
ACHIEVEMENTS RELATING TO THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE JUDICIAL BRANCH ON THE IBERIAN PENINSULA (2009)

Women were forbidden from serving as judges in Spain until 1966 and only in 1977 did a woman don judicial robes for the first time. At present, only 9% of posts in the highest court are held by women, even though the Organic Law on Effective Equality between Men and Women establishes that public authorities shall try to maintain a balanced presence of men and women.

The progress made in Portugal in terms of judicial power has been less substantive, with women holding just 2% of posts. In Andorra, women hold 22% of posts in the High Court of Justice.

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of information from the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.

In short, although women’s involvement in building political autonomy varies by country and subregion, it coincides with the general perception held by the political elites in that the progress made by women is irreversible.

E. Are there glass walls between the three spheres of autonomy?

A study of the progress achieved in each sphere of women’s autonomy shows that building virtuous connections between them remains a pending challenge for information, analysis and, above all, equality policies. To paraphrase the idea of the glass ceiling preventing women’s promotion to the
higher echelons of decision-making, it has come to light that there are also “glass walls” preventing women’s autonomy from being addressed in the comprehensive and cross-cutting manner required by gender policies. This preliminary conclusion, which is more a hypothesis for further investigation, casts doubt on the way in which the international recommendations in favour of gender equality have been put into effect. Those recommendations, in addition to championing a rights-based approach, call for comprehensive, cross-cutting and decentralized policies, with a territorial basis. It is no coincidence that the approach to studying the situation of women has been found to be sectoral and fragmented and has in fact contributed to the formation of these glass walls.

Although there are multiple paths towards women’s autonomy, all of them must traverse the boundaries between public and private life if the cost of development is not to fall on women’s shoulders. The countries that have been able to make progress and introduce effective changes in women’s daily lives have strengthened the exercise of their rights inside and outside the home, in economic, political and cultural life, and they have done so by encouraging coordination between institutions and sectors; nevertheless that coordination remains weak in the region.

Yet what happens in each of the dimensions of autonomy cannot be explained solely by the interactions between them, but is also shaped by the sociological, historical and cultural processes influencing them. In addition, the very persistence of gender discrimination limits the scope of the changes that can be brought about by activating virtuous relationships between the dimensions of autonomy.

Women’s labour-market participation has contributed to the decline in fertility rates, which has, in turn, facilitated their access to the labour market. Education is also a factor in empowerment and poverty eradication. However there are still large numbers of poor women, and even educated women continue to earn less than their male peers. The increase in political participation has changed the democratic landscape, but even those who do reach the highest levels of representation encounter glass ceilings or cultural or financial barriers that prevent them from exercising their political citizenship with greater independence and resources.

It is known that a healthy life free from violence goes hand in hand with educational and cultural changes. It is also known that when women have their own income, however small, they are better able to cope with violence, while those who depend economically on their aggressor face greater difficulties. Nevertheless, many women with an income, stable employment and even high levels of education die at the hands of their partners or former partners, exposing the darkest side of discrimination.

The government representatives who attended the eleventh session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean recommended making efforts towards greater economic autonomy and equality in the workplace, developing all the social and economic policy measures required to advance towards the attribution of social value to unpaid work and recognition of its economic value, and strengthening the right to care for all. They also agreed on the need to enhance the citizenship of women, and promote and strengthen policies that guarantee the human rights of women in all their diversity. They also emphasized that it was imperative to adopt measures on gender, race and ethnic equality to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth.

They recommended, furthermore, broadening the participation of women in decision-making at the regional, national and subnational levels through the adoption, by States, of the measures required to ensure gender parity in order to reinforce the democracies of Latin America and the Caribbean from an ethnic and racial point of view.

Governments were called on to address all forms of violence against women and to adopt preventive and punitive measures as well as measures for protecting and caring for women that further the eradication of all forms of violence against women in public and private spheres, with special attention to Afro-descendant, indigenous, lesbian, transgender and migrant women, and those living in
rural, forest and border areas. They also established that it was necessary to promote policies aimed at changing the sociocultural patterns that reproduce violence and discrimination against women.

They further recommended facilitating women’s access to new technologies and promoting egalitarian, democratic and non-discriminatory practices by the media, as well as policy measures that facilitate access for women of all ages to communications and new information technologies, including education and training in the use of such technologies for networking, advocacy and exchange of information, educational activities, and the specialized use of these technologies in economic activities.

Lastly, they recommended promoting the conditions for the integral health of women and for their sexual and reproductive rights, in order to guarantee the conditions and resources for the protection and exercise of women’s sexual and reproductive rights throughout the life cycle and across population groups, free of all forms of discrimination, based on the integrated approach promoted in the programme of action of the International Conference on Population and Development and by the Committee against Torture of the United Nations, which means ensuring that abortions are performed safely where authorized by the law, reviewing laws that punish women who have undergone abortions, strengthening the plans and programmes that promote healthy maternity and reducing adolescent pregnancies.
II. Mainstreaming gender within the State

A. Introduction

Analysis of the role of institutions responsible for gender equality policies should be placed in the context of the recent gradual revaluation of the role of the State at the global level. During the latest crisis, the State regained its importance thanks to its intervention to ensure the recovery of the worldwide financial system. This action by the State has led to a worldwide debate concerning its role in relation to other public policies, weakened in recent decades by the predominant free-market paradigm. Clearly, this critical debate which also led to demands for changes in fiscal, labour and environmental policies means that gender equality now has new partners to work with.

This report on women’s autonomy includes both a picture of the current situation and —where possible— elements for assessing the current functioning of machineries for the advancement of women, created to guide and coordinate gender equality policies.

Fifteen years after the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), those machineries have reached a turning point as a result of their own development and also of changes in the political and institutional context. In many cases, they are experiencing times of uncertainty regarding their own role and the continuity of public policies. This situation arises out of a paradox: on the one hand there are the desired and undesired effects of progress in gender equality, which in turn generate new demands and resistances —sometimes open opposition— and on the other hand, the barely visible results of public policies which, in general and despite the progress made, have not been able to reverse inequality and discrimination.

Not only is fulfilment of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) still pending; other global challenges have arisen in relation to climate change, technological development, the economic and financial crisis, and geopolitical changes and their consequences for democracy.

Attention must be paid to challenges resulting from the capitalization of achievements and advances in the area of equality —for example, laws on quotas and violence— while the machineries must also be able to open up spaces for dialogue and innovation, to construct arguments and establish partnerships to deal with the modern world. The machineries must renew their efforts to strengthen their capacities, seek new partnerships and gather resources so that their efforts can reach all women in the coming decades.
The present analysis will identify a number of problems. First, starting from the institutional status of the machineries, it can be said that they have been dependent on political will, since they do not have the necessary and sufficient resources (political, financial and technical) to carry out the functions allocated to them in each country\textsuperscript{19}.

Second, the performance of the machineries, while uneven at the regional level, has helped to install the gender mainstreaming agenda in the countries and has been particularly successful in cases where there has been sufficient capacity to coordinate virtuous partnerships with the political system (for example, the legislature and political parties) and with women's social movements, especially the feminist movement.

Third, machineries for the advancement of women —whose functions include the promotion, development and updating of public policies— have generally challenged the inertia of the political culture which often kept them in the position of operational arms of welfare policies or support mechanisms for First Ladies’ charitable work. They have faced these challenges with the help of consultative councils, agencies, decentralized bodies and accountability mechanisms on gender equality policies.

Lastly, the ministerial rank of the leaders of some of the machineries and their Cabinet participation have enabled them to strengthen their inter-ministerial coordinating role and has given legitimacy to their position as partners of various State bodies.

Public policies on equality and the institutions which regulate them are the product of a process of interaction between social, political, economic and cultural actors in a variety of historical contexts. Together with those who promote campaigns for women’s rights and gender policies in general, there are also negative actors who resist the inclusion of new gender concepts and the recognition of hitherto unknown rights, but who are crucial when it comes to supporting or opposing political decisions. These actors are often the key to the long-term existence of machineries for the advancement of women and the maintenance or elevation of their rank, functions and autonomy for policy decision-making. The machineries have been the outcome of interactions between actors with differing world views, interests and resources. Their existence results from a creative combination of transnational and national social movements.

Mainstreaming gender policies entails recognizing women as subjects of rights. The feminist campaigns of past decades succeeded in establishing the link between inequality and discrimination and launching affirmative action and just policies for gender equality, both for redistribution and for recognition within and outside the State\textsuperscript{20}.

At the time of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), almost all countries had already set up some sort of mechanism concerned with women as a population group or in the context of policies on the family, well-being or poverty. The purpose was to “design, promote the implementation of, execute, monitor, evaluate, advocate and mobilize support for policies that promote the advancement of women”. In response to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, a set of standards was already being compiled in order to promote equality between the sexes at the country level.

\textsuperscript{19} These are of course preliminary conclusions, which will be discussed further in subsequent reports.

\textsuperscript{20} Fraser (1997) sees redistribution as the response to socio-economic injustice and recognition as the response to cultural injustice. The author argues that socio-economic injustice is rooted in the political and economic structure of present-day societies and takes differing forms, such as exploitation, marginalization and denial of an acceptable material standard of living. Cultural or symbolic injustice, for its part, underlies social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. Cultural injustice also takes a variety of forms: cultural domination, non-recognition, lack of visibility or lack of respect. Fraser argues that gender injustices correspond to the area of dilemma between redistribution and recognition. To achieve gender equality, therefore, there must be affirmative solutions to injustices, correcting the end results or transformative solutions which modify structures, taking into account the intersections of class, race, gender and sexual orientation.
These bodies have been involved, with more or less success, in the different areas of society and government through public policies and programmes. Many of them came into being thanks to the achievements of women’s movements, particularly the feminist movement, in past decades. They then became legitimate and institutionalized as public affairs through various forms of political campaigning (Fernós, 2010). The feminist movement opened up the way to the construction of a common agenda with the State; this process was not without confrontations, tension and even failures. This, however, amplifies the value of the achievements made (Montaño and Sanz, 2009).

Although there has been some progress from a long-term perspective, it has to be said that even at that time, in referring to the inclusion of national machineries in the structure of the State, it was stated that “National machineries are diverse in form and uneven in their effectiveness, and in some cases have declined. Often marginalized in national government structures, these machineries are frequently hampered by unclear mandates, lack of adequate staff, training, data and sufficient resources, and insufficient support from national political leadership.” This analysis opened up a debate on the nature of the machineries for the advancement of women, a debate which relates to one of the most innovative and challenging aspects, gender mainstreaming in development.

In some cases, the course and direction of institutionalization are determined by the depth of inequalities and the degree of acceptance of their existence within the various social groups in each country, the characteristics of the institutions, the democratic political culture and the hegemonic cognitive frameworks which, in turn, orient governments’ development strategies and the countries’ positions on the global political stage. At the same time, mainstreaming gender within the State has led to political, cultural and institutional changes (Guzmán, 2011).

The machineries have considerable resources, such as feminist and women’s organizations’ capacity for dialogue and mobilization, technical knowledge for gender analysis and the existence of a valuable international network for the exchange and design of agendas. When these resources find the necessary political will, they have enough capacity to promote movement from the margins to the mainstream, but if they do not find it, they can become symbols of government ineffectiveness.

The machineries have been part of the democratization process in the region in recent decades, but they also coexisted with the State reform processes promoted by the Washington Consensus, which favoured the reduction of their functions, restricting them to a welfare role which is subject to privatization policies. In 20 countries and territories in Latin America, 17 national machineries were established by law before the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995); in the other countries, machineries were set up between 1995 and 2002 (see annex for further information). As for the Caribbean countries and territories, all the machineries were created before the Conference or in the year it took place; this was also the case in the Iberian countries, except Andorra, where the organ was established subsequently. The creation of these machineries was due to the strength of women’s movements, which mobilized globally and nationally to establish them in the gaps between reforms and in alliance with the international community. Analysis of the machineries shows the interaction—sometimes paradoxical—between institutional discourse on minimizing the size of the State and the social ideas which resist it and reinterpret it both within and outside the apparatus of the State.

To better understand the institutionalization of the machineries in the region, it must be borne in mind that the existing rules, routines and procedures in the State apparatus around which the

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21 Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, item H, Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, para. 196.
23 El Salvador in 1996; Panama in 1995; Peru in 1996.
political action is taking place are also beliefs, paradigms and cultural codes which can contradict the legal framework sustaining them.

B. Importance of coordination and venue

Compared with other types of institutions responsible for structural change, machineries for the advancement of women have short lifetimes, none of them being over 20 years old, and they have a variety of legal forms which reflect, among other things, the negotiations which gave rise to their creation and the political influence necessary for their establishment.

The instigators —mostly women— of the gender equality debate which began with the creation of early machineries had to hold their discussions at the same time and place with both civil society and political systems, to explain why the machineries had been created, accepting the rules of the State but still fighting for women’s rights and claiming a place for the subject of gender equality. This had to be done in the face of resistance from the institutional culture and at some stages, from the rules of civil society and the women’s movement.

There were at least four influences or models in the creation of machineries for the advancement of women, which took on their own character according to the historical circumstances and contexts in which they arose. The pre-Beijing Brazilian model arose out of the constitutional reform of 1985, and can be characterized as penetration of the State by the movement through an advisory council, creating its “own space” within the State. The first mechanism in Brazil was created against the background of a virtuous circle between the process of democratic change and the presence of a social movement which was politically strong, although it was distrusted by formal politics (Montaño, Pitanguy and Lobo, 2003).

The model of the Women’s Institute of Spain (1983), which emphasizes the technical profile, the decentralization processes in its activities and cross-cutting gender issues in the State, has provided the inspiration for institutes for women in a number of countries in less propitious contexts than in Spain, which is characterized by technico-political development and its impact on public policy, and constitutes the politico-institutional model. From the beginning, the Chilean model adopted an institutional profile in a pact for its creation with the political parties of the governing coalition. Costa Rica is an exception, since the mechanism is part of a political culture firmly rooted in the judicial basis of public policies and where justice has had a key role in the pioneering formulation of a number of policies. All machineries for the advancement of women have social, technical and institutional dimensions but their influence varies.

These entities evolved in a variety of political orientations and social conditions; thus, discussing models does not necessarily imply that they have been replicated in all countries, but it does mean that they influenced the design of their machineries. In some cases, the machinery began as a committee created solely for a specific purpose, such as the creation of a national plan of action for fulfilment of international obligations or the follow-up to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and subsequently became part of the government. For example, when the Ministry of Equality of Spain —which existed from 2008 to 2010— was created, reference was made to the Latin American experience of institutions having ministerial status.

In the past 15 years, pursuant to the Beijing Platform for Action, there has been a very positive trend towards the execution of programmes, projects and activities for gender equality, conducted by a variety of State bodies and promoted by the machineries or on their own initiative.\(^{24}\)

\(^{24}\) It also provides for the creation of a variety of mechanisms for participation in civil society, for inter- and intrasectoral coordination, and for promoting access to public services to allow women access to rights. All of them require accountability on the part of governments, society and even cooperation bodies.
Many of these programmes are decentralized into local sectoral bodies, coordinating their activities with local and municipal authorities; these in turn have implemented specific mechanisms, with staff and budgets allocated yearly, and having the power to generate their own actions\textsuperscript{25}.

The Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) recognized the role played worldwide by NGOs and civil society, a role which is still observed in the region. The Beijing consensus for the creation of a \textit{coordinating entity at the highest level} has been an important benchmark, and the terms of the debate which preceded that consensus are, surprisingly, still current 15 years later. The Beijing Platform for Action calls for national mechanisms for the advancement of women to be central policy coordinating bodies. The debate which led to the adoption of the chapter entitled “Strategic Objectives and Actions” proposed that mechanisms for the advancement of women should be defined within a generic concept which reflects the diversity of forms of government and the levels of political will available at that time\textsuperscript{26}. The reference to the location of machineries “at the highest possible level in the Government” was what enabled many countries to keep the machineries at low hierarchical levels, arguing that they \textit{could not do otherwise}. While it was not possible to go further, this agreement facilitated the creation of institutions, some more successful than others, which lie at the origin of today’s structures. Although knowledge is available —for example, methods for the analysis and planning of development policies from a gender perspective— in no country is it applied consistently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX II.1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MACHINERIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION</td>
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201. A national machinery for the advancement of women is the central policy-coordinating unit inside government. Its main task is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas. The necessary conditions for an effective functioning of such national machineries include:

a) Location at the highest possible level in the Government, falling under the responsibility of a Cabinet minister;

b) Institutional mechanisms or processes that facilitate, as appropriate, decentralized planning, implementation and monitoring with a view to involving non-governmental organizations and community organizations from the grass-roots upwards;

c) Sufficient resources in terms of budget and professional capacity;

d) Opportunity to influence development of all government policies

202. In addressing the issue of machineries for promoting the advancement of women, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.


\textsuperscript{25} In addition to the normative mechanisms, it was agreed at Beijing that mechanisms should be created in the 12 areas of concern which were considered as independent and mutually correlated, and particular attention was given to the creation of institutional mechanisms to offer services in areas such as health, protection against violence and access to credit, giving priority to women in situations of disadvantage or discrimination.

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More than 15 years after the Fourth World Conference on Women, it can be concluded that the region has made progress in the direction that was agreed, although the picture is mixed from the viewpoint both of the hierarchical positions achieved by the machineries for the advancement of women and of mandates and institutional capacities, particularly in terms of the political will which goes with them.

An important achievement of the machineries at the national level has been the legal embodiment of gender equality in most countries. As a result, in many of them, the entities can use legal rules to change the direction of political discourse towards women, replacing paternalistic or welfare-based viewpoints with modern views on equality. In other countries it has been harder to translate such discourse into public policies, and the machineries and their civil-society links have been weakened. Interestingly, public discourse is an indicator of the degree of States’ commitment, of the strength of women’s movements and of the general condition of the societies in which they exist. In societies where equality is not a universal value, it tends to be more difficult for the language of gender equality to be adopted, whereas in societies where institutions are fragile it has not been possible to construct a narrative which transcends governments’ periods of office.

Such machineries do not operate in a vacuum. In analysing their functioning, therefore, it must be borne in mind that people and institutions do not take decisions in a vacuum or as members of abstract categories. Their decisions are influenced by the interactions they have with other people and institutions. A closer look at these interactions will show that the machineries have been objects of dispute between women’s social organizations and the religious and political groups which have influenced their discourse and policies. The success of the machineries is, among other things, thanks to the fluidity of communication with feminist and women’s organizations, the strength of coordination between all institutional actors involved, and States’ overall institutional strength.

In countries which combine weak feminist agendas, a weakened State and active conservative forces, the machineries bear the brunt of discourse which usually has two characteristics: a strong confessional tone and a weak State architecture. Institutions, including the machineries for the advancement of women, tend to foster order because rules, routines and standardized ways of operating stabilize political activity and reduce the risk of arbitrary action. Nonetheless, the rules are not only routines, procedures, conventions, roles, strategies and organizational structures around which political activity is constructed; they are also beliefs, paradigms, cultural codes, cultures and knowledge which surround, sustain, elaborate and contradict those roles and routines.

The machineries are at the highest possible level in each country, but that level is not necessarily the most effective or powerful. It has not been possible to overcome the precarious nature of many machineries whose continuity is threatened by changes of government or of ministers, or by budget cuts.

The establishment of machineries in the region took place amid an international debate which questioned whether it was a matter of joining the mainstream; whether doing so involved transforming the very idea of development; whether the inclusion of new analyses, tools and goals might go unnoticed in State structures; or whether it was enough to add new ingredients to development policies. The issue was whether what was proposed was ultimately a modification of the recipe and the menu, and of the recognition of sectoral policies as objects of a cross-cutting gender perspective on its own merits (Montaño, 2007). Another question was whether the need for creating legal rules and modifying the legal framework could be seen solely as a technical action. The definition of the territorial scope of machineries and the interdependent role of other institutional actors such as the legislative and judicial branches of government were seen as central. It was no coincidence that Beijing considered that political will had an essential part to play and that the regional and international dimensions had a role which could contribute to the fulfilment of international commitments.
BOX II.2
INSTITUTIONS ARE BOUND BY THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Article 2

a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;


The 11 conferences held at the regional level, beginning in 1977 in Havana, the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean (1995-2001) and the 45 meetings of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference have contributed to a field of political action which has supported and strengthened the capacities of the machineries’ leaderships, broadening the discourse of gender equality at the level of States and society. As stated in the Regional Programme of Action, the idea is to “expedite the achievement of gender equity and the complete integration of women into the development process, together with the full exercise of citizenship in the framework of sustainable development with social justice and democracy”.

The functioning of these institutions can be seen as a school of public policy and administration which is open to scrutiny by the public and, in particular, by women’s organizations, in the light of democratic principles. One pending task is a comparative study of gender policies with other cross-cutting policies to determine the extent to which participatory procedures, alliances and resistances underlying the policies have similar features, and where the machineries’ particularities lie. In the various regional consensuses (see box II.3), the countries reaffirmed their intentions to strive to ensure that the machineries had the highest possible hierarchical status, and that they should be provided with budgetary resources so that they could promote and monitor public policies with a gender perspective.

The areas under consideration have ranged from the importance and hierarchical levels of machineries for the advancement of women in terms of the formulation of public policies on gender equality and their normative and guiding role for these policies, the ability to mainstream a gender perspective in public administration, their permanent or temporary nature, and budgetary constraints or the role of international cooperation in their sustainability, to the lessons of the intersectoral nature of relations with civil society and those of communications strategies, the quality of institutional management and the use of information technology, and the identification of their weaknesses and challenges in the context of economic, technological and institutional changes which transcend the level of the State and bring about dialogue between actors of varying types and power levels (Montaño, 2007).
BOX II.3
CONSENSUSES ADOPTED AT THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Santiago Consensus, 1997
b) To apply to development an integrated approach linking social and economic policies in order to achieve equity, bearing in mind that, if development is to be sustainable, the gender perspective must be explicitly brought into these policies, since all plans, programmes and policies inevitably embody a certain viewpoint on gender and determine on that basis what roles individuals should play in society; to ensure that plans and programmes fully incorporate an appropriate gender perspective in their policies and decisions (“mainstreaming”) and provide for the equitable distribution of resources in society;
d) To strengthen national mechanisms or government offices for the promotion of women in the technical, budgetary and politico-administrative spheres, in order to enable them effectively to exercise their functions of managing and monitoring public policies to foster gender equity, which is the responsibility of all State entities;

Lima Consensus, 2000
d) Reorient public policies, placing social and gender equity at the centre of governmental concerns, and achieve this systematically, basing these policies on assessments of their differential impact on males and females and monitoring their implementation; (e) Create or strengthen institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and the promotion of equal opportunity and endow them with sufficient amounts of all relevant types of resources, a legal identity and budgetary autonomy, along with political support at the highest level so that they may, inter alia, promote and monitor gender policies on a transversal basis;

Mexico City Consensus, 2004
xxix) Guarantee that national machineries for the advancement of women are provided with financial and human resources, build their political capacity and consolidate their institutional status at the highest possible level to ensure that they can fulfil their mandates efficiently and effectively;
xxii) Develop instruments for monitoring and assessing public policies with a view to mainstreaming a gender perspective, taking racial, ethnic and generational diversity into account, in all State actions;
xxv) Promote international cooperation to support the activities of national machineries for the advancement of women to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, and urge United Nations organizations and specialized agencies to continue to support national efforts to ensure equal rights and create opportunities for women in the region through cooperation programmes, studies and research, among other initiatives, in accordance with their mandates;

Quito Consensus, 2007
i) To adopt measures in all necessary areas, including legislative and budgetary measures and institutional reforms, to reinforce the technical capacity of government mechanisms for the advancement of women and their ability to have an impact on policies, as well as to ensure that they attain the highest-ranking level in the structure of the State and that the gender-based institutional framework as a whole is strengthened so that they can fulfil their mandates;

Brasilia Consensus, 2010
f) To encourage also the creation and strengthening of government machineries for policies on women at the national and subnational level, endowing them with the necessary resources and highest hierarchical status within the Government, in keeping with national contexts;


The position that the machineries should have in the State apparatus (“as high as possible”), the attributes and the type of legal rule creating them have been central concerns.
Beginning in the 1980s, most national machineries established in Latin America, the Caribbean and the Iberian peninsula took the form of committees, divisions, offices and councils, within existing ministerial structures. Generally, the majority fell within the area of social policy, mostly in the areas of labour or social welfare; a second group came under the office of the President or the Prime Minister or, less frequently, the Ministry of Justice or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In fewer cases they were established from the beginning with high ranks in the State hierarchy, attached to the Office of the President or as departments with ministerial rank. Ministries and bodies with direct access to the Office of the President were the dominant trend in Latin America (Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Puerto Rico) (see annex).

In the cases of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (1979), Haiti (1994) and Paraguay (1992), the machineries were created as ministries. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, however, the machinery lost that status twice at five-year intervals, regaining it in 2009 when the People’s Power Ministry for Women and Gender Equality was established. In Colombia, the office of the Presidential Counsellor for Women’s Equality is part of the Office of the President, which provides its budget; it also receives financial support from international cooperation and the private sector. In Guatemala, the President’s Department for Women is an entity attached to the Office of the President and its leader has ministerial rank; it is, however, subject to considerable limitations in terms of the State budget. In Paraguay, the Department of Women’s Affairs also has ministerial rank and is attached to the Office of the President. Although it had auspicious beginnings, it has failed to develop further. Its activities and performance have been limited by factors such as lack of resources. This suggests that location and rank are not enough to ensure that the machinery can carry out its mandates.

Lastly, it should be noted that there is a dual trend, with some machineries rising in rank while others have lost their strength and independence with the passing years. Changes, therefore, do not necessarily signify setbacks; modifications can tend to strengthen their activities.

Other formulas for equality mechanisms were also approved at the national level, with a degree of autonomy, with broader mandates and with substantial means for action. One such case is the Office of the Ombudsman for Women, which has the authority to define norms and educational and supervisory functions and to set the procedure for the conduct of complaints and claims; to authorize the imposition of administrative fines and compensation, and to determine what corrective measures may be necessary in response to actions or omissions which offend against women’s rights. Thus, it departs from the norm in relation to the machineries’ scope of action; this relates to its connection to the State and the scope of justice.

The other atypical case is that of Cuba, where the Federation of Cuban Women is in charge of policy and speaks on behalf of women's groups.

In Brazil, the machinery quite clearly reflects its progress in the area of institutionalization. Initially, it was placed under the Ministry of Justice and later transformed into the Special Secretariat on Policies for Women attached to the Office of the President. It was established by decree, but a law enacted in 2003 awarded ministerial rank to its head, who became a member of the Cabinet. Beginning in 2010, the Secretariat on Policies for Women became part of the Office of the President, with ministerial rank. The case of the Plurinational State of Bolivia is another example of multiple changes. Its machinery was created in 1993 as a subordinate department and became a vice-ministry in 1997, but its hierarchical rank was subsequently lowered. Ecuador is another interesting example; having been created as a second-rank entity, the machinery is waiting for its new status to be defined, which depends on submission to and approval of the draft law on the new mechanism by parliament.

In smaller countries and territories, especially in the Caribbean subregion, gender equality is mostly considered subordinate to institutions responsible for social policy, and those in charge are government officials. Thus, they should not face the rate of turnover which occurs with political appointments. This is the case in Anguilla, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Jamaica, Netherlands Antilles
and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Nonetheless, the machineries have experienced a variety of changes in recent years. The Bureau of Gender Affairs of Grenada (Division of Gender and Family Affairs) has come under a variety of ministries in the course of its history. From 2000 to 2008, it was part of the Ministry for Social Change. Following the elections in 2008, it was relocated to the Ministry of the Family, Youth, Sport and the Environment; as a result of the current transformation of that Ministry, it now comes under the Ministry of Youth, the Family and Sport. This clearly shows its low status in the government structure. Nonetheless, there is a clear trend in the Caribbean towards adopting plans of action and strategies for mainstreaming gender issues in specific areas of work. Economic support from the international community and United Nations bodies has been essential in this process (Fernós, 2010).

The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean has classified machineries for the advancement of women in the region and in the Iberian peninsula into three levels, taking into account the rank of each one’s leader as well as its institutional status. The highest level consists of machineries having the status of a ministry, or which are headed by a minister or have full Cabinet participation. It is assumed that such situations favour their guiding and coordinating role and their participation in and influence on sectoral policies. The intermediate level is made up of machineries whose heads report directly to the country’s President or Prime Minister but do not have seats in the Cabinet, so it is assumed that they have fewer opportunities to be involved formally in mainstream decision-making. In third place are the machineries which come under ministries or lower-ranking authorities such as vice-ministries, institutes, councils, divisions and other entities, and it is assumed that they need to go through more channels to influence policymaking.

The first group comprises the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Paraguay. The countries and territories at the second level are the British Virgin Islands, Colombia, Ecuador27, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico and Trinidad and Tobago28. Latin American countries in the third category are Argentina, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay. Some 90% of the countries and territories of the Caribbean are in this category: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname.

The legal basis for the creation of national machineries varies from country to country and reflects the strength of the mechanisms. In Latin America, 10 countries and territories have created machineries on the basis of organic laws: Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Puerto Rico. In seven countries they were established by decree: Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay. In Guatemala, the machinery was created by government order. In the countries and territories of the Caribbean, establishment of the machineries has been included in rules which regulate the executive power (Fernós, 2010). For all of them, this entailed establishing the normative or guiding role of policies for equal opportunities and the coordination of gender mainstreaming in the public policies of the various sectors of the State29.

The debate on the legal framework has been a concern for many of the machineries, and there have been numerous initiatives to consolidate legal standards to give them greater stability. In the case of equality legislation such as that of Mexico and Spain, and the constitutional reforms promoted in the

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27 Gender institutions in Ecuador are changing, and a series of rules has been created, generating agencies in various State entities. Nonetheless, in November 2010, the Commission for Transition to the National Women’s and Gender Equality Council, created in May 2009, which administers the assets and liabilities of the former National Women’s Council (CONAMU), accomplished its goal of designing the public institution responsible for gender equality. But this does not imply a change in its transitional nature.

28 See [online]: http://www.cepal.org/oig/adecisiones/.

29 Information from the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, decision-making autonomy, see [online]: http://www.cepal.org/oig.
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Ecuador, these are a setback in relation to the decrees and decisions which regulate government actions regarding the machineries and would prevent abrupt shifts in decision-making in the future resulting from changes in government. Furthermore, the organic laws set forth the previously mentioned roles in the case of the Caribbean countries and territories.

### TABLE II.1
GENDER EQUALITY OBSERVATORY OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN*: MACHINERIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN BY HIERARCHICAL LEVEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Number of countries and territories</th>
<th>Country or territory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher hierarchical level +</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ministry or entity whose head has ministerial rank</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Entity attached to the Office of the President or mechanism whose head is directly responsible to the President (offices attached to the presidency, secretariats, national institutes and other entities)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Puerto Rico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower hierarchical level -</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Entities attached to a ministry (vice-ministries, under-secretariats, institutes, councils and other entities)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama and Uruguay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Caribbean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Number of countries and territories</th>
<th>Country or territory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher hierarchical level +</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ministry or entity whose head has ministerial rank</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Head of a mechanism without ministerial rank but directly responsible to the Prime Minister</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>British Virgin Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower hierarchical level -</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Head of a Department or other responsible entity</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*In 2007, during the tenth session of the Regional Conference, the governments of the region requested the creation of a Gender Observatory. The Observatory was launched in 2008, to contribute to the strengthening and systematization of the production of gender statistics, to monitor public policies designed to promote gender equality, to support governments in the analysis of the situation in the region and to disseminate good practices in policies for gender equality. The Observatory’s gender indicators reflect women’s autonomy in the areas of private and public life. They are organized into three areas of autonomy which are necessary for the full exercise of their rights as human persons: economic, physical and decision-making autonomy.

The significance attached to the establishment of the machineries by law reflects a number of things: first, public and political recognition has to be obtained in order to favour the continuity which is very likely to be broken when there are changes of government or cabinet reshuffles. This
recognition also improves access to resources and budgetary appropriation; more importantly, it provides the framework for restricting the tendency to give them the role of political operators, project executors or substitutes for family policy. This recognition also favours institutional structures, breaking deep-rooted customs which consider that working with women should be under the responsibility of the First Lady or of social-welfare bodies. These concerns explain the difficult negotiations which take place. Achieving the status of a Ministry, the rank of Minister and a seat in the Cabinet has been part of the struggle to place the machineries at the highest level. This is also true of the location of the machinery either below or next to social policies —especially at a time when those policies had lost their strength and their universal and rights-based orientation, emphasizing interventions which target “vulnerable” groups— which reflects the space available for those machineries.

Second, it reflects the limited understanding of the causes of gender inequality; in other words, it shows that governments’ willingness was limited to the social sphere, leaving aside economic and political policies. It is those areas that clearly show the inconsistency between machineries’ legal mandates and the real possibility of affecting economic or defence policies on the basis of machineries which are sufficiently challenged with implementing cross-cutting policies in fields such as education and health. It is on the basis of these considerations that we should value the achievements made in some countries where innovations have been introduced in public administration, bringing about changes in sectors not traditionally associated with concern for gender equality, such as the police and the armed forces (useful examples of this are Argentina and Chile and, to a lesser extent, Peru and Uruguay) and finance ministries.

There is a third explanation for the emphasis placed on laws which regulate the machineries, and it is particularly important from a gender perspective: the need to make up, at least in part, for the weight of informal processes which are proper to policymaking and politics. Women who are active in the machineries are part of what García de León (1994) calls “elites suffering discrimination”. Under this heading, she refers to the minority of women having power who, on the one hand, are isolated from other women, are part of an elite and are also discriminated against by the male segment of society. That is, they are not completely on one side or the other. Laws protect gender authorities who have to conduct their work while dealing with excessive demands from members of the male elite who operate under their own codes, in spaces and timetables which suit their functions and where they often adopt informal agreements which are translated into laws and policies. The laws therefore have a strategic value for the machineries, but are not sufficient. There is a story to be told about incursions into informal networks by women’s ministers and authorities, but that falls outside the scope of this report.

The cases of Chile and Paraguay are situations where the legal framework is a factor of stability, because it has also gone hand in hand with political alliances and the forces of the social movement. Similarly, machineries in Chile and Mexico are examples of institutional stability, partly because their continuity in time has given them sufficient space to consolidate their institutions, despite changes in governments’ political orientation.

In countries where political change has been more frequent or more radical, the machineries have been weakened, and in some cases have remained vacant throughout a government’s term of office, as was the case in Colombia, or “in transition”, as in Ecuador.

Study of the creation and functioning of the machineries in the region reveals that developments have been highly varied from one country to another. Even now, the governments of the region recognize that some of them have suffered losses in terms of resources and autonomy in recent years. Some machineries have gradually weakened; and even those whose status is protected by law nonetheless have to depend on political will to provide them with a sufficient working budget.
Despite setbacks, machineries for the advancement of women have tended to achieve higher status in the executive branch of government and have increasingly taken on governing, normative and policymaking roles. This can be seen as indicative of the modernization of the State in most of the countries of the region\(^\text{30}\). There is still, however, a tendency for these entities, beyond their normative role, to conduct low-impact programmes which are often welfare-oriented.

This is true of the Vice-ministry for Equal Opportunities of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which has gone through a number of changes of status since the creation in 2003 of the Ministry for Women’s Affairs. The latest change, in 2009, placed it under the Ministry of Justice, which has a division responsible for issues of gender-based violence: this has caused a fall of 62\% in its allocated budget\(^\text{31}\). The political crisis of 2009 in Honduras caused a 12\% budget cut; the budget recovered in 2010 and returned to its former size. These changes in status, expressing the political will of the President, can definitely have a negative impact on programme implementation, because they exclude certain themes and include others, distorting the public policy coordination function and causing falls in hierarchical position and budget allocation.

In Latin America, changes of government detract from institutional stability, particularly the continuity of the mission and political agenda of gender machineries (Rico, 2008). Changes of government generally involve two types of threat. The first relates to risks from the review and redefinition of their mission and their decision-making role, with the associated dangers; the second is the impact on staff rotation, resulting in a weakening of capacities which have been developed, which in turn is a threat to the sustainability of implemented gender policies.

Regarding the weakening of the scope of action of the machineries, one of the central concerns is what happens to them when there is a change of government. The continuity or strengthening of their normative role and the scope of their political influence on planning or the guiding role in the design of legislation are among the principal questions. No less important are the doubts hanging over staff and over the women's movement, as to whether policies which are welfare-oriented or aimed at changing gender relations will continue to exist, be changed or be subsumed into other entities. This reflects the fact that these risks relate not only to hierarchical position or possible changes of mandate, but also to approaches or assumptions regarding the responsibility of the State in women’s access to their rights and autonomy in exercising them.

### C. Management

Gender mainstreaming in public policy takes place against a background in which a new global institutional framework is promoted, which includes in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women and various human rights treaties. Institutionalization takes place gradually in countries where there are still discriminatory legal frameworks or the legacy of the norms and social constructs of the previous century. This requires spending a great deal of time on modifying legal frameworks.

Initially, the thinking behind the creation of machineries for the advancement of women was mixed with that of a welfare culture, in that policies for women targeted poor women, recognizing their vulnerability but also their ability (or availability) to be intermediaries between public services and family needs. This was the period of rural development programmes with participation by women, emphasizing issues such as maternity, nutrition, literacy and microcredit. Concern for poor women, especially in rural areas, arose amid the crisis caused by the weight of external debt and the so-called

\(^{30}\) Eight countries in the region have machineries at the highest decision-making level.

“lost decade”. Paradoxically, the generalized impoverishment of the population increased the visibility of women’s needs and generated opportunities to strengthen poor women’s organizations.

BOX II.4
GENDER MAINSTREAMING

"Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."


Second came the gender perspective, recognizing the need to transform relations between the sexes —as a relational formula— and this was the stage of constructing what could be achieved. On this basis, countries would build the gender institutions which exist now. That is where a set of ideas on gender mainstreaming come together, centred on a rights-based approach. Constraints were identified, caused by the general weakness of the State and the lack of political will for recognition of the equality agenda as a component of public policy, and the rights-based discourse was pushed aside by market-oriented thinking. It is interesting to see how many machineries for the advancement of women embodied a vision which was objectively contrary to free-market policies and made progress thanks to civil society. The machineries were not neutral in respect of the political alliances which created them. Their development should be considered in the light of tensions resulting from their weak and even subordinate positions in political coalitions, and the alliances and trust forged with the women’s movement. The leaders of the machineries often met with resistance from their governments and political parties and criticism from their social allies, reflecting long-standing political insecurity.

The third approach can already be seen in a number of countries in the region where, on the basis of policies designed to eliminate legal and social inequalities, there have been positive impacts on what are strictly speaking development policies. This is true of the countries which have integrated a gender perspective into their welfare reforms, employment policies, public budgets and other policies outlined below.

The generation of knowledge has been essential in ensuring that gender equality is considered as a public policy goal and forging political alliances. Studies have sought to clarify the varying faces of inequality in a range of social spheres (day-to-day interactions, the family, the labour market and politics), to show the degree of dependency of women’s lives on the interests of others, and to create awareness of their varied points of view, their expectations and motivations and the characteristics of their participation in different social spaces. The knowledge produced by gender bodies has also sought to show that the problem can be defined as a public issue which can be dealt with by institutions and that it can be brought into line with legal and constitutional frameworks and with administrative structures and procedures. Following an initial stage of promoting awareness of inequalities, the studies are focusing on clarifying how gender is a factor in institutional structures, the family, the market, politics and the State, all of which perpetuate inequalities.

After several years of existence, the challenges that lie ahead are far beyond the machineries’ capacities and can be dealt with only if they work in an effective and timely manner with governmental and political agendas. The major challenge is how to deal with increasingly complex social demands requiring concerted action by governments, particularly on economic policy, which is
still the weakest area from the viewpoint of gender mainstreaming. There are still few initiatives
designed to link fiscal policy, investment and employment with gender equality.32

The machineries have become more visible mostly in relation to the creation of policies to
combat violence, which have become the “natural” area for their interventions; affirmative action
policies, particularly regarding political representation, where they have had to deal with political
systems which are often allied with forces from outside the institutional powers, and reproductive
rights, which have in many cases been well received within the machineries but have been opposed by
governments to such an extent that institutional crises have resulted. All these areas have been spaces
for inter-agency activity to develop strategies with others and bring gender narratives into play.

In a number of cases, the machineries have defended the rights of sexual minorities without
succeeding in persuading governments of opposing political tendencies. These tensions have been
resolved in various ways depending on political forces and leaderships. Over the years, tensions have
abated in some cases in that the role of the machineries has adapted to the expectations of
governments, taking on a subsidiary role focused on a welfare-based approach or coming under the
authority of the First Lady. In other cases, changes have been made to the agenda and the conditions
of their functioning allowing them to spearhead change and reforms in those spheres, persuading
heads of State and political parties. Between these extremes, there is a range of areas of negotiation
and agreements which explain the depth of reforms in spheres such as legislation and the creation of
services. This field of study is very important for understanding impacts on political will.

This is among the dilemmas of managing cross-cutting policies. Unlike sectoral and territorial
policies, leadership is often exercised through third parties, requiring complex management which
includes prior efforts to create awareness, generally in cooperation with civil society and negotiation
with authorities of higher political rank (not all the machineries are headed by Cabinet members).
Those authorities tend to be unaware of the gender mainstreaming agenda; when they become aware
of it, they do not allocate suitable resources or recognize its importance.

The intellectual and technical advocacy of the cause of equality encounters institutional and
cultural resistance which only the intervention of political will at the highest level can overcome. One
of the clearest examples of the time scale and complexity involved in placing these policies in the
mainstream is the elimination of violence. It gained visibility and recognition back in the 1990s33, but
only recently has it begun to make significant headway in the structures of States and governments. It
is a crime whose scale and gravity leave no room for doubt concerning its seriousness and its impact
in areas such as employment, the family, health and safety. Nonetheless, several decades passed
before combating violence against women was adopted as a policy. Delays in the punishment and
elimination of such violence have a negative effect on the legitimacy of the machineries, although in
general governments benefit from progress in this area.

To achieve their goals, the machineries have conducted countless activities and campaigns to
create awareness among decision-makers, the media and the public at large, by publicizing the
inequality that women suffer. They have been key institutional actors at the governmental level,
capable of placing gender inequality on the agenda of national debate, helping to reduce
misunderstandings, prejudices and stereotypes which persist in certain public policies that see women
as mediators between the family and the State and not as subjects of rights in their own name. The
machineries have been less successful in ensuring that such awareness is reflected in sustainable and
universal programmes. In most cases, actions in favour of women which are conducted by other actors

32 See: Consideration and assessment of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document
of the twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000). Countries of Latin America and the
Caribbean. See [online] http://www.cepal.org/mujer
33 The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, or
Convention of Belém do Pará, was signed in 1994.
remain as pilot schemes or specific programmes targeting vulnerable groups, as in the case of training and microcredit programmes which are hardly ever sufficiently ambitious to achieve universal long-term coverage.

Machineries for the advancement of women have played an important role in promoting the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in public policies. This has entailed proposing management models and programmes for integrated and sectoral application of policies. A major contribution has been the vision of integrated policies and the tools developed for their implementation, such as gender statistics, budgets and planning with a gender perspective, integrated analysis and participation. This has kept time with the coordination of their development with State reforms and policies put together at the national level, acquiring greater recognition, mainly by publicizing their actions or coordinating them with other State sectors, which has increased their visibility. Thus, both the legal status and the powers of national women’s offices can be seen as an indicator of a State’s degree of modernization. The accumulated experience has been reflected in equality laws such as that in Mexico, where mainstreaming takes the form of a complex strategy requiring cooperation by the entire State machinery and coordination with the other branches of government.

**BOX II.5**

LAWS REGULATING GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Both Mexico and Spain have enacted laws on equality which include gender mainstreaming.

In Mexico, the Gender Equality Act defines gender mainstreaming as the process which ensures women’s involvement in any action which is planned, be it legislation, public policy or administrative, economic and cultural activities in public and private institutions (article 5). The law also provides for coordination with the National Women’s Institute to promote gender mainstreaming in public administration at the national level and to support the development of mechanisms for equal participation by women and men in the economy, decision-making and in social, cultural and civil life (article 9). Article 10 emphasizes the consideration of budgetary, material and human resources for compliance with this law. The law also establishes guidelines to be followed in national policies carried out by the federal executive branch. Among other things, it includes ensuring that budgetary planning incorporates the gender perspective, supports mainstreaming and provides for the implementation of programmes, projects and actions for gender equality (article 17).

In Spain, Law 3/2007, which seeks effective equality between men and women, provides for mainstreaming of the principle of equal treatment and opportunities between the sexes in public administration (article 15). It also calls for the government to undertake a gradual process, in the medium term, of effective integration of the principle of equality and the gender perspective in development, at all levels of administration, to make possible and effective the application of Spain’s strategic equal opportunities plan, providing for specific actions to achieve mainstreaming in the activities of Spanish overseas cooperation and the promotion of affirmative action to foster significant change by establishing the principle of equality, both within the administration and in the development mandate of the Spanish overseas cooperation system (article 32).

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

The implementation by the State of public policies on equality has led to significant capacity-building for gender analysis in a variety of areas of public affairs, and has broadened the knowledge of the State among the staff of the mechanism. Furthermore, as capacities, skills and competences have been developed within different entities of the State institutional framework, this has added to the legitimacy of the machineries’ actions and mission; their staffs’ capacities have also gained recognition.
Some countries, such as Chile and Mexico, have taken significant steps towards integrating concepts and standards which depart from the neutral approach to policies in the planning associated with budgetary management. They have decided that government departments are to include disaggregated data on their beneficiaries, state gender goals explicitly and even fulfil objectives with associated incentives, as is the case with the gender perspective system of the Chilean management improvement programme, implemented from 2002 in at least 158 public services and led by the National Women's Service (SERNAM) and the Budgetary Affairs Bureau (DIPRES).

Intersectoral work, considered of key importance for gender policies, has gradually led to the formation of technical teams within ministries or subordinate departments to coordinate activities. This applies to commissions working to produce gender-disaggregated data, attend to the prevention of violence and promote entrepreneurship and reproductive rights, and others responsible for programmes requiring public service coordination. The latter has generally given rise to joint learning processes and has often diminished existing resistance. Furthermore, in a number of countries, inter-ministerial committees promoted by the machineries for the advancement of women have inspired policies in favour of other population groups such as persons with disabilities, children, indigenous peoples, older persons and sexual minorities. It is in this framework that attention is given to the mainstreaming concept to generate new strategies in programme implementation.

The machineries have also interacted with local governments, achieving synergies in some cases and, in others, bringing about democratic tensions in which the local authorities, generally autonomous, can hold back or promote changes in favour of women. What is of interest here is to show that gender mainstreaming strategies benefit public administration because they approach policies from an integral perspective, promote strategic and participatory planning, include territorial dimensions and, in most cases, do not fail to give explicit consideration to the symbolic dimensions underlying policies and programmes.

Thanks to inter-agency negotiations, the machineries for the advancement of women have achieved changes in the area of policies on equality, such as laws prohibiting violence, laws on quotas, and health and anti-poverty programmes. A constant in this process has been the coexistence of arguments which seek to make maternity natural, an unavoidable destiny and women’s main function. Another aspect has been neutral accounts which fail to reflect inequality and which subsume analysis of the situation of women into other categories such as the situation of the poor or vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Given the normative nature of most gender-related bodies, professionals must work through other public actors to influence the groups and machineries tackling gender inequality in their respective sectors. They must constantly seek to persuade others of the importance of their proposals or negotiate their acceptance, taking into account the actors’ ideas and priorities. The strategy of gender mainstreaming is by definition a negotiation process, frequently reflected in discourse which underlines the positive aspects of equality policies for their negotiating partners. Gender then appears as a value added—which it certainly is—drawing attention to the risks and negative consequences for the other side. A classic example is the quota law, which has been defended by the feminist movement and by a variety of mechanisms as a guarantee of democracy, without pointing out the fact

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34 The management improvement programme is a tool to support the administration of public services, led by the Budgetary Affairs Bureau and the National Women’s Service. Its aim is to improve the overall management in each service. It is based on developing common strategic areas in public administration and comprises development stages or statuses for each area. Employees who successfully complete these stages receive a financial reward. Launched in 2002, the gender perspective system is one of these strategic areas. Its objective is to incorporate this perspective into the strategic outcomes of public services, to bring about a redirection of resources to narrow gender gaps and gradually incorporate the gender dimension into the day-to-day practice of the public sector. The stages are: assessment, implementation, planning and a fourth stage consisting of dissemination of progress and analysis, evaluation of outcomes and recommendations.
that it entails women obtaining positions of power, resulting in an objective loss of power for men, who are overrepresented in politics; this thereby becomes the main motive for rejection.

**BOX II.6**

**RESULTS OF INTER-Agency COOPERATION**

**Uruguay: Inter-agency working group on the national care system**

A 2010 presidential resolution established an inter-agency working group responsible for designing a national care system in Uruguay. The working group comprised representatives from the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Economics and Finance, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Work and Social Security, the Office of Planning and Budget, the Social Insurance Bank, the National Institute for Children and Adolescents, the State Health Service Administration and departmental and municipal governments.

The resolution establishes that: “it is deemed fitting to design a national care system to avert the effects of trends that will become more pronounced in Uruguayan society: a double burden of unpaid work that will fall on the shoulders of women caring for children and adults and older persons, the loss to society of the energy that these women could contribute to the country’s production and economic growth, and the opportunities they will miss out on because they are unable to join the education system.

Within this framework, the National Women’s Institute —which forms part of the Ministry of Social Development— endeavours to ensure that the care policies and activities to be implemented meet women’s needs. According to 2007 data, women in Uruguay dedicate 36 hours per week to unpaid work, versus the 15 hours spent by men.

**Costa Rica: Inter-agency technical group on gender and health**

In Costa Rica, the State has undertaken the responsibilities allocated in the relevant international agreements (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention of Belém Do Pará and the Gender Equality Policy of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), as well as national instruments such as the national policy for gender equality and equity, the national health plan, the national sexuality policy and the national plan to prevent violence against women and domestic violence and to care for its victims. It has also worked in the implementation of intersectoral processes contributing to achieve gender equality and equity.

In 2004, an inter-agency group on gender and health was created by decree, under the coordination of the Ministry of Health and with support from the Costa Rican Social Security Fund, the National Institute of Women, the National Institute of Statistics and Census, the judiciary and with PAHO as the technical cooperation body.

The objective of this group is to promote the production and analysis of relevant data on health and gender, to identify inequalities and gaps between the sexes and contribute to technical and political decision-making in the field of health.

Source: Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), April 2011.

Many have underlined the benefits to families and the community of improved access for women to material, health or educational resources. While machineries for the advancement of women seek to empower them, many governments prefer to talk about benefits in terms of the well-being of children, birth control and poverty reduction, without first affirming the rights of women themselves as citizens. Inevitably, the discourse of gender organizations adapts to governments’ official positions and follows the priorities of the government’s programme and sectoral agendas, so that ultimately the naming of programmes and policies will reflect their contents. For example, there are differences between allowances paid to women heads of household, to mothers or to all
poor women regardless of their marital status, although the amounts paid will have positive effects on reducing per capita poverty.

Despite the obvious achievements, progress in achieving the necessary changes has often required adapting discourse, according to the strength and legitimacy of the actors involved. For example, in discussions of eliminating violence against women\textsuperscript{35}, the concept of domestic violence is resorted to; regarding the fact that women are overrepresented among the poor\textsuperscript{36}, the subject turns to vulnerability; affirmative action policies such as electoral quotas are represented as being contrary to selection on merit; and post-natal care is considered as an obstacle to women’s employment performance, showing the persistence of the notion that women are the mainstays of the family, and men are the breadwinners.

The inclusion of new policy paradigms and discourses influences the interventions of the State in society; this opens the way for other discourses and representations at the material, symbolic and normative levels. The possibility of producing and disseminating new discourse depends on the nature of the formal and informal rules controlling relations among different actors.

Political discourse concerning gender equality policies tends to have different meanings. Sometimes the voices of public authorities emphasize women’s vulnerability or extol maternity, or both, in announcing programmes or laws; sometimes women are depicted as beneficiaries and citizens; and sometimes the discourse is critical, questioning the continuing existence of stereotypes and seeking to establish a rights-based perspective. Political discourse on gender equality and the strength of the machineries go hand in hand. The discourse is created by numerous actors, showing how politics is a construction in which each actor places a component and there often remain empty spaces, discords and challenges which have to be solved through a series of approximations.

This is what is happening with some of the region’s machineries, which after long years of negotiation have managed to open up spaces, propose development policies and strengthen links with civil society; others have remained exposed to danger from other narratives which reduce gender to a synonym of womanhood, allocate to women the task of protecting and serving the family, or in other cases keep them as the voiceless half of the community.

The sense and scope of public policy on gender equality have been enriched with the passing years, focusing on the consequences of inequalities in women’s lives; they also consider the roots of this unjust state of affairs. Their main goal is to enable women to progress in well-being, equality and autonomy. The analyses underline the simultaneous impact of public policies on areas of public and private power; on the degree to which women are recognized as equals; and on parity in representation. Gender policies make possible “a sort of plunge into the production mechanisms of the social and political order and processes through which our modern societies are born create meanings, become transformed and then act upon themselves” (Sénac-Slawinski and Muller, 2010).

There are at least three different approaches to the implementation of gender policy in the region. These may coexist or succeed each other as time passes. The first takes a welfare-oriented approach to poor women (focusing on themes such as women and development, rural women, maternal health, and literacy). Second is the gender and development approach, which includes affirmative action and is part of the construction of today’s gender institutions. The rights-based approach is now being developed, together with mainstreaming. The third approach is that of gender

\textsuperscript{35} As defined in the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, or Convention of Belém do Pará (1994).

\textsuperscript{36} In Latin America, around 2009, for every 100 urban men living in poverty there were 117 poor women. The ratios were highest in Argentina and Chile, where there were 139 and 129 poor women per 100 poor men, respectively. In the same period there was also a difference in the status of heads of household: in Latin America around 2009, male-headed households made up 35.7% of poor households, while female-headed households represented 37.6% of poor households (ECLAC, 2010a).
mainstreaming in development; this relates to public policies such as reforms in the areas of health, pensions or labour. One such area is that of care policies in the framework of the care economy.

There is generally a perceptible difference between the discourses and proposals of feminist movements, the ideas put forward by gender organizations, and suggestions from authorities or officials in other areas of public administration. In the production of knowledge, feminist activists, academics and politicians focus on explaining the systemic mechanisms responsible for generating inequalities and revealing the relations of power and interests that are involved. While these discourses are closer to those on women’s equality and emancipation, those of gender machineries are closer to governments’ frames of reference and programmes; gender mainstreaming agendas must therefore be reinterpreted along the lines of their institutional agendas to permit communication with authorities and officials. These discrepancies or lags are a source of tension between the machineries and civil society or between the machineries and the governments they represent.

Nonetheless, the ideas disseminated in the discourses of gender bodies within the State have varied depending on advances in legitimacy and institutions that gender equality has achieved in society, the degree of openness of the country and cultural and generational changes, so that what can be expressed has expanded with the passage of time. On the other hand, changes in correlations between political forces in a conservative direction and the veto power exercised by some institutions have been the main factors in setbacks.

While the governments of the region have recognized gender mainstreaming as an analytical and planning tool for including gender in various ministries’ policies, the latter have encountered obstacles for their implementation. There is generally no effective supervision, and there have been few advances in investment and training of specialists to implement gender policies in a coordinated manner or in ensuring that all public bodies include these new dimensions relating to inequality. Strategies having sectoral impacts linked to specific projects or programmes still predominate.

The region has some important examples of programmes in which women are well represented, such as cash transfer, health and microcredit programmes. With a few exceptions, these programmes do not include specialists in gender analysis or planning. At the other extreme, other countries have integrated this dimension into central policies, such as welfare reforms in the domains of health and care.

1. Budget: the most precarious pillar

What gender machineries can achieve is determined by their relative authority and their scarce resources, as well as by the position and strength of the institutions with which they interact and the level of recognition and legitimacy recognized by the partners they work with. Although all countries recognize equal legal status for machineries for the advancement of women, the machineries need to convince other actors of the need for short-term anti-discrimination measures to be implemented and for appropriate resources to be allocated. This has meant that a large part of the efforts and resources available has been used for raising awareness among the authorities and generating strategies for obtaining improved budgetary allocations, constraining the guiding and normative role of the machineries.

As for the Chilean experience of the gender perspective system in its management improvement programme, learning experiences have revealed processes and tools for gender mainstreaming which go beyond short-term decisions or the wishes of any particular authority. They also show that public bodies can incorporate gender in the design, execution and assessment of their policies. One of the lessons of this process is that mainstreaming can operate in a vertical sense in respect of decision-making and also in a horizontal coordination sense —both within and between institutions—to follow up processes and produce greater achievements. Thus, the inter-agency gender machinery can be legitimately incorporated into the State, moving it more and more out of its
isolation. This requires an institutional density reflected in mechanisms at all decision-making levels, but this is not enough to involve all actors and develop coordination. The latter are constrained by working practices adapted to working with dispersed strategies, requiring links between political and technical bodies to coordinate work in the bureaucracy with government priorities.

In the case of Chile, the processes of capacity-building to mainstream the gender perspective in public administration, both in machineries and at various levels of administration, are marked by much variety in momentum and emphasis on the orientation of equality policies. For most members of the machineries, the challenge was initially centred on overcoming the lack of awareness of the various functions and strategies of the various ministries with which programmes needed to be conducted. There were also questions, lack of awareness, resistances and prejudices among the partners involved.

Analysis of the budgets allocated between 2008 and 2010 in eight Latin American countries and territories (Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Puerto Rico) shows that the percentage increases in their budgets vary from one country to another.

International cooperation has been one of the major factors for the stability of machineries in the region’s poorest countries, where, in some cases, it is clear that its contribution should mostly be used for financial and technical support for institution-building, technical capacity-building for task forces, and the production of studies for decision-making on policies, and their improvement and coordination, as well as various strategies related to gender mainstreaming processes. This has also been of key importance in creating entities to strengthen their political presence at various levels of government or at international events. Nonetheless, changes in the support strategies of international cooperation have also detracted from the continuity of the machineries’ work, especially in the countries that are poorest and therefore most dependent on external assistance.

From the perspective of civil society and the women’s movement, discourse, feminist theory, social practices and new forms of interaction established with various actors are all contributing to the emergence of a new paradigm which questions the frontiers separating private from public and makes them more permeable, denying the ideology of radical differences between the sexes. The discourse on real equality has spread throughout the machineries and is generating a new way of looking at policies. Feminist theory has helped to question the paradigms which consider that economic injustice is solely responsible for inequalities, without recognizing factors of gender, ethnic origin or age. It has also challenged the belief that the recovery of democracy means immediately extending its principles to the various social spheres and spaces.

D. Policy trajectories

For illustration purposes, six of the countries of the region have been selected for analysis of the policies implemented by the machineries to strengthen the gender order and counteract the impact of gender inequalities on women’s lives and on the quality of the various social relations which structure society. To ensure that the selected countries represent the diversity of the region, one country has been selected from each of the subregions: Ecuador (Andean subregion), Guatemala (Central America), Jamaica (the Caribbean), Uruguay (Southern Cone), Brazil and Mexico. The analysis was conducted on the basis of the reports presented by the six countries at the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. The policies highlighted have varying levels of political and legal sustainability. This reconstruction has been organized on the basis of three dimensions of autonomy considered by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean:
a) Physical autonomy: this is the right to exercise control over one’s own body; to make decisions on reproductive health, freely exercise one’s sexuality, make decisions and enjoy physical integrity in a life free from violence.

b) Decision-making autonomy: this relates to women’s presence in decision-making in the various levels and powers of the State, and to measures to promote their equal and full participation.

c) Economic autonomy: this is the capacity to acquire and control economic resources (the possibility to earn one’s own income, control material goods and intellectual resources, and make decisions regarding family income and assets).

The policies implemented in the aforementioned group of countries following the latest two sessions of the Regional Conference (Quito, 2007, and Brasilia, 2010) sheds light on the systemic nature of gender inequalities and reflects the simultaneous intervention of machineries for gender equality in various spheres in order to deal with a variety of forms of inequality present in the dimensions of physical, economic and political autonomy.

1. Physical autonomy

The policies which seek to deal with the status and scope of measures to ensure the broadening and full exercise of physical autonomy are those which mobilize resources to enable women to improve their control over their bodies and their sexuality, such as legislation on the various forms of gender violence, national plans for the protection of physical autonomy and laws or plans on sexual and reproductive health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Public policy</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
<th>Ecuador</th>
<th>Guatemala</th>
<th>Jamaica</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>Uruguay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policies to overcome obstacles to the exercise of physical autonomy, such as gender violence in all its forms, endangering women’s physical integrity and their right to decide what to do and where and how to live</td>
<td>Legislation on femicide</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Policies to improve and enrich reproductive health and the exercise of sexuality by both sexes | Legislation on sexual and reproductive health | 2005 | 2006 | 2005 | | | 2008 |
| Decriminalization of abortion | | | | | 2008 Mexico City |
| National policy on family planning | 2007 | 2005 | | | 2007 |
| National policy on maternal mortality | 2004 | | | | 2009 |

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on analysis of legislative archives and country reports submitted at the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Quito, 2007 and Brasilia, 2010).
2. Autonomy in decision-making

This area comprises actions to expand opportunities to participate fully in decisions which affect individual and collective life. Policy goals are equal representation in decision-making forums, fostering actions to promote the recognition of diversity and the creation of spaces for debate and political and social coordination in various spheres of public policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Public policy</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
<th>Ecuador</th>
<th>Guatemala</th>
<th>Jamaica</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>Uruguay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure citizenship for women by promoting their civil documentation and access to and exercise of their social rights</td>
<td>Policies for the elimination of violence and discrimination against LGBT people and for promotion of sexual citizenship</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Protect the rights of women who are in exceptional situations, deprived of liberty or living with disabilities</td>
<td>Policies for the assistance of migrants</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recognize the diversity of life choices and styles: sexual and cultural citizenship</td>
<td>Legislation on equal rights and opportunities between the sexes (Constituational)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promote women’s social and political participation and their access to decision-making spaces</td>
<td>Recognition of the principle of parity in constitutional frameworks</td>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promote the creation of women’s organizations and recognize them as social and political actors</td>
<td>Quota legislation 1995/1997</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implement affirmative action to ensure women’s presence in representative or appointed posts</td>
<td>Plans for equal opportunities between the sexes</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2008-2011</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2007-2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging citizenship</td>
<td>Legislation on women’s participation in public service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legislation on ecological balance and the environment</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1988, latest reforms 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on analysis of legislative archives and country reports submitted at the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Quito, 2007 and Brasilia, 2010).
Following the 1990s, which were characterized to a great extent by a wave of quota laws in the region, the 2000s saw legislative initiatives seeking to promote broader changes in women’s participation. Clear examples of this new orientation are the constitutional recognition of parity in Ecuador (2008) and the implementation of legal frameworks on equal opportunities and rights between the sexes (Guatemala, 2008; Jamaica, 1999; Mexico, 2006 and Uruguay, 2007).

The second half of the 2000s saw the appearance of new themes linked to an “emerging citizenship” which seeks to connect the gender perspective to sustainable development and environmental policies (Ecuador, 2008; Guatemala, 2003-2008; Mexico, 2007). Concern also arose for migrant women (Brazil, 2009; Ecuador, 2006; Guatemala, 2008), in the framework of societies where there are migratory movements “with a woman’s face”.

### 3. Economic autonomy

This area relates to policies which seek to guarantee economic and social rights and the redistribution of productive and reproductive work. These policies can be divided into four groups: (i) those which promote women’s access to their own income and assets, meaning that they must be guaranteed access to land, credit and entrepreneurship. These target rural and urban women who do not have their own incomes and groups particularly vulnerable to unemployment, such as young people; (ii) policies designed to eliminate inequalities and gaps between the sexes in the labour market, and to reduce gender segregation in employment. Their objective is to improve the quality of employment; (iii) policies on the recognition of domestic work and its reconciliation with productive work, and (iv) policies to improve women’s employability through access to higher levels of education, and the promotion of continuous learning and entry to non-traditional areas in higher education.

In the past decade, the majority of public initiatives were certainly related to efforts to establish or improve women’s economic autonomy. Most of them began to be implemented following the Mexico City Consensus (2004).

### TABLE II.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin America and the Caribbean (6 Countries): Economic Autonomy and Policies to Strengthen Gender Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies to promote women’s access to their own incomes and assets by ensuring access to land, credit and entrepreneurship. Their targets are rural and urban women without their own incomes and groups especially vulnerable to unemployment, such as young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granting of maternity leave to unemployed women workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement policies with a gender perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paternity leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land ownership policies or programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development policies or programmes targeting rural women workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table II.4 (concluded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Public policy</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
<th>Ecuador</th>
<th>Guatemala</th>
<th>Jamaica</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>Uruguay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policies or programmes to develop micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises</td>
<td></td>
<td>2005/2008</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic autonomy for women belonging to different racial and ethnic groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies to eliminate inequalities and gaps between the sexes in the labour market and to reduce gender segregation in that market. Their goal is to improve quality of employment</td>
<td>National plans for decent work</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies for employment equality between the sexes</td>
<td>Policies for employment equality between the sexes</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-care facilities for working mothers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies to recognize domestic work and its coordination with productive work</td>
<td>Ratification of ILO Convention 156</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>1989</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation on domestic work</td>
<td>Legislation on domestic work</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-use surveys</td>
<td>Time-use surveys</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household satellite accounts</td>
<td>Household satellite accounts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earmarked budgets</td>
<td>Earmarked budgets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies to improve women’s employability through access to higher levels of education, the promotion of continuous learning and entry to non-traditional areas in higher education.</td>
<td>Training programmes to improve employability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on analysis of legislative archives and country reports submitted at the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Quito, 2007 and Brasilia, 2010).

The range and quality of interventions vary, since some of the machineries are more concerned with resolving situations of maximum vulnerability, exploitation and violence affecting women, whereas others are moving towards the inclusion in the debate of controversial themes which affect the basis of the gender order and the very foundations of modern societies. This is true of recognition of sexual and reproductive rights, women’s control over their own bodies, different sexual orientations and family arrangements, and the creation of new principles of universality based on the recognition and positive appreciation of diversity.

In analysing the varying machineries, it is seen that they all respond to dimensions of women’s vulnerability (exploitation, violence, poverty and mistreatment), a large majority seek to affect the mechanisms of discrimination operating in various social spheres, and some of them, the fewest, have been able to promote policies which call into question the gender paradigms on which society is organized. These are not only policies relating to sexuality, but also those concerning curricular changes in initial and basic education of boys and girls, where sexist bias is still present and the system apparently remains unchanged in most of the countries of the region.
4. Coordination capacities at the regional, subregional and national levels

In parallel with the activities of the governing bodies which promote gender equality in the countries of the region, or enhanced by those bodies, a considerable network of organizations came into being from the 1980s onwards in both sectoral and subnational areas. This was often the result of efforts by national machineries in their search for support from bodies nationwide, and in others it was due to initiatives by other State agencies (Fernós, 2010).

Bodies established at the government level have included inter-ministerial gender equity committees, women’s units within ministries or vice-ministries, ombudsmen’s and public prosecutors’ offices and advisory women’s councils, together with teams created to give status to specific programmes designed to deal with problems of violence, headship of household and temporary work, and to consider policies from multisectoral perspectives.

Working units have been instituted in ministries in the framework of policy decentralization and gender mainstreaming efforts in the various State bodies. Most of these mechanisms have arisen out of campaigning by national machineries and their determination to integrate the gender mainstreaming agenda and make it possible to have a stronger influence on wider sectors of the community and, at the same time, increase their capacities and include new actors in the gender equality agenda. Some of these new entities in the region, such as parliamentary women’s groups, specialized judicial panels and gender units in electoral bodies, are the fruit of initiatives which arose from each institution’s international dialogues. This does not necessarily mean that communications or exchanges have been established with national machineries. One such example is the agreement among electoral bodies grouped together under the Tikal Protocol to create a Tikal Protocol Commission, consisting of magistrates from organizations in three countries, to conduct joint monitoring with the Tikal Protocol secretariat (IIDH/CAPEL) of the agreements relating to the area of equality and inclusion.

As for electoral bodies, the institutionalization of relations between them and the machineries for the advancement of women at the country level is varied; the most widespread form consists of weak links relating mostly to cooperation on generating information and joint work to comply with obligatory quotas. The levels of these institutional connections range from the absence of links (Guatemala), dependency on actors’ good will (Dominican Republic and El Salvador), medium-level institutionalization, where regulations are accepted (Ecuador, Plurinational State of Bolivia), and institutionalization through formal working agreements (Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru) (Schneider, 2010).

One way of working at the municipal level has been the creation of subnational machineries for gender affairs, such as municipal women’s offices, which conduct programmes against violence or focused on women heads of household or indigenous women in the community. In Costa Rica, the establishment of Municipal Women’s Offices (OFIM) has been promoted by the National Institute of Women (INAMU). These are seen as necessary machineries to influence public policy design at the local level with a view to creating a fairer and more equitable society. Their central goal is to promote policies, programmes, projects and strategic actions to move forwards toward the full exercise of women’s rights and gender equity and equality at the local level.

In Latin America, the machineries have promoted exchanges of experiences and learning between women parliamentarians, helping to build a new approach to politics. There have been a

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37 Twenty-third session of the Conference of the Association of Electoral Bodies of Central America and the Caribbean (Tikal Protocol), 29-31 July 2009.
number of experiences of this kind, including the Women’s Caucus of the Brazilian National Congress (1988); the Bolivian Women Parliamentarians’ Union (UMPABOL) (1996); the Bicameral Women’s Caucus of Uruguay (BBF) (2000); the Bicameral Temporary Commission for the Defence of Women's Rights, in Colombia (2006); the Round Table of Peruvian Women Parliamentarians (MMPP) (2006) and the Women’s Bench of Argentina, comprising the country’s women senators (2008)\(^{40}\).

The creation by women parliamentarians of mechanisms to agree or promote legislative changes favourable to women in their national parliaments has given rise to women’s benches or women’s parliamentary committees, which have sought cross-cutting agreements to promote gender equality. “These spaces have been able to transcend ideological and political identities, not without difficulties, to promote shared legislative agendas fostering women’s rights and the supervision of gender policies. One such example is that of Mexico’s women parliamentarians, who have played a part in increasing the resources earmarked for women, distributed over a number of programmes. In 2010, they obtained an increase in the executive’s draft proposal for 2011 for that purpose and secured a rise in the earmarked funds of 36% in relation to the previous year, not counting the Opportunities programme, and obtained a 6.17% rise in the budget of the National Women’s Institute compared to the previous year” (INMÚJERES).

Furthermore, with a view to installing and following up policies for women’s rights at the local level, a widespread structure of networks has been growing up, consisting of women members of local authorities who seek to strengthen gender equality policies and citizen participation at that level. These networks include the Association of Women Members of Local Authorities of Ecuador (AMUME), the National Association of Women Municipal Council Members and Mayors of El Salvador (ANDRYSAS) and the Association of Councillors of Bolivia (ACOBOL)\(^{41}\). All these mechanisms are linked to subregional networks of women members of local authorities, such as the Federation of Municipalities of Central America (FEMICA) and the Federation of Women in Municipal Authorities of Latin America and the Caribbean (FEMUM-ALC).

The networks of women members of municipal authorities have worked with national associations of municipalities, and have been able to begin processes of greater or lesser scope. One such example is the case of the work agreement established with FEMUM-ALC to foster capacity-building among local authorities, strengthen municipal administration and promote coordination to revitalize gender mainstreaming agendas in local development\(^{42}\).

The coexistence of institutional actors at the regional, subregional and national levels has been consolidated in recent years with subregional bodies belonging to initiatives by women ministers in the region, designed to seek spaces for dialogue and shared learning, strengthen the action of machineries for the advancement of women and increase the scope of their impact on their respective governments. This is true of the Special Meeting on Women of MERCOSUR, the Advisory Andean Council of High Authorities for Women and Equal Opportunities, comprising the Intergovernmental Network of National Machineries for the Advancement of Women of the Andean Region (REMMA), or the Council of Ministers of Women’s Affairs of Central America (COMMCA).


\(^{42}\) Association of Municipalities of Peru (AMPE), Inter-agency cooperation agreement between AMPE and the Federation of Women in Municipal Authorities of Latin America and the Caribbean [online] http://www.ampeperu.gob.pe/p_convenios/conve_nacional/FEMUMALC.pdf, April 2011.
### TABLE II.5
SUBREGIONAL MACHINERIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Year created</th>
<th>Body to which it reports</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Member countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council of Ministers of Women’s Affairs of Central America (COMMCA)</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Central American Integration System (SICA)</td>
<td>Normative, its agreements are binding and its budget is financed by States parties</td>
<td>Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Mexico participates as an extraregional observer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Meeting on Women of MERCOSUR (REM)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>MERCOSUR</td>
<td>Consultative</td>
<td>Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Associate members: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental Network of National Machineries for the Advancement of Women of the Andean Region (REMMA)</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>The Andean Advisory Council of High Authorities for Women and Equal Opportunities was created in 2009.</td>
<td>Consultative</td>
<td>Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) with Chile as a full member.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### BOX II.7
FUNCTIONING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF WOMEN’S AFFAIRS OF CENTRAL AMERICA (COMMCA)

This body formulates proposals, conducts analyses and makes recommendations on political, economic, social, environmental and cultural matters of common interest, to promote and link the development of the member countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA), with the promotion, preparation and proposal of policies designed to transform the situation, status and condition of women at the subregional level.

COMMCA is a standing council and comprises representatives of the Ministers for Women’s Affairs of Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Mexico also participates as an extraregional observer in accordance with SICA regulations and policies.

This body was incorporated into SICA, within the social integration subsystem, pursuant to a joint declaration dated 30 June 2005 by the Presidents of Central America, during the twenty-sixth ordinary meeting of Heads of State and Government of the countries of SICA, held at Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Its predecessors include the Subregional Network of National Machineries for the Advancement of Women of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean and the equivalent Subregional Network for the countries of the Southern Cone, established in 1990. In 2002 they were joined by the Regional Network of National Machineries for the Advancement of Women of Central America and the Caribbean.

(continued)
Box II.7 (concluded)

The headquarters of COMMCA is located in each country in the subregion for six months at a time, the duration of that country’s pro tempore chairmanship. The order in which the headquarters rotate corresponds to the geographic location of countries in the subregion, moving from north to south.

The organization has a technical secretariat, whose function is to follow up and implement actions of an administrative and technical nature contained in all resolutions submitted to the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Presidential Meetings, which are binding on all the member States in the subregion.

To achieve the goal of preparing a regional agenda, and for its functioning, COMMCA has an annual investment budget financed equally by all the member States. The State currently occupying the pro tempore chairmanship provides the facilities and budget for the meetings of the Council of Ministers of Women’s Affairs. With the authorization of the Council, the Technical Secretariat may obtain funds from cooperation bodies for the execution of regional projects or the strengthening of the Technical Secretariat, the pro tempore chairmanship and the meetings of the Council itself (article 19).

The gender mainstreaming resolutions of COMMCA, which guide the various sectoral Councils of Ministers which meet in the framework of SICA, are binding and compulsory for all member States. Only through provisions of a legal nature may they oppose their implementation.


E. Recommendations

1. Strengthening of gender institutions and the role of machineries for the advancement of women

As stated above, the region’s machineries for the advancement of women have moved forward with policy formulation and implementation and, in some areas, have made significant progress in the area of gender equality. There is a consensus that the success of the machineries’ activities depends on a wide range of factors which create the conditions for progress, weakening or stagnation of the gender-based institutional framework. Political regimes, the quality of democracy, institutional strength and the political and economic reforms being implemented have created opportunities for gender equality policies.

Consideration of progress and setbacks in gender equality policies shows that governments should strengthen the machineries, raise their hierarchical status and increase their resources and capacities to carry out their functions. Their normative authority must be recognized, as should the need to create new instruments which, in the long run, will make it possible for gender equality policies to have integrated and cross-cutting status, not only for the implementation of specific programmes, but also for strengthening them, especially in the economic field. This entails coordinated efforts among States to increase budgetary allocations and move forward with the creation of legal or administrative instruments requiring the gender perspective to be included in the various areas of development. Strengthening partnerships and communication with parliamentarians and the training on gender policies in decision-making would raise the quality of the political and technical process, an issue which arises during budgetary discussions.

Machineries for the advancement of women should not be entities responsible for implementing social policy or dedicated to social development, functions which some countries have tried to prioritize. They should have a normative, directing and guiding role regarding gender
mainstreaming in the apparatus of the State. Likewise, the implementation of gender equality policies requires that their resources should not compete with those earmarked for putting specific policies into practice. They should go together with budgets targeted on or allocated to women, so that they take nothing away from the budget of the machinery or diminish resources for capacity-building or the implementation of programmes at the sectoral level.

The changes to be brought about depend not only on the strengthening of the machineries or the social and political strength of the women’s movement. In fact, the latter has to construct a political agenda which clearly sets out the points for dialogue and negotiation with the State, so that it can move forward with parallel strategies in some areas and joint ones in others. As mentioned in the publication What kind of State? What kind of equality?, the change proposed “requires the virtuous and strategic alignment of social and political forces for taking advantage of the windows of opportunity” (ECLAC, 2010a) to ensure that government agendas incorporate gender equality and that governments put into practice the political will to change gender inequality.

Interaction with other political and institutional actors fostered by the machineries has made it possible to promote gender-based institutional development in the State. This has favoured the dissemination of gender analysis, the development of capacities and the installation of policies on equality which are implemented in different areas of the institutional network of the State, without necessarily being part of a concerted gender equality agenda among public actors; rather, it is a response to the impetus from a critical mass on gender present in the State, with capacity for dialogue with social and political actors. This entails sustained coordination efforts so that advances can be observed, highlighted and welcomed jointly and, at the same time, any obstacles can be critically analysed.

The strengthening of social and political networks and partnerships to achieve the political, technical and financial sustainability of the machineries, as well as the strengthening and creation of instruments to institutionalize relations with other areas of government —ministries and other State bodies— is a crucial task for increasing the legitimacy, the recognition and, therefore, the political strength of the machineries.

One of the challenges confronting machineries for the advancement of women is that of continuing to move forward with the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming so that the gender perspective thoroughly impregnates institutional cultures beyond the people or teams responsible in each section of the State. Efforts must therefore be made to use tools and methodologies which give meaning to the gender perspective in relation to their functions and tasks within each ministry or department concerned. It is not sufficient that teams are aware that gender inequality must be overcome and that the conditions for change can be created. It needs to be a process led at the highest levels of political decision-making in each ministry or department, to give it the legitimacy and priority needed for the execution, assessment and redesign of policies on equality.

This should occur in parallel with the development of the technical and political capacities of the machineries’ teams, to promote dialogue with ministerial, sectoral or subnational staffs, basically to carry forward processes which require expert knowledge of strategic objectives, programme targets and the challenges of each sector and institution the teams are working with. This is a key aspect in the legitimization of the machineries.

The task of influencing various government departments is crucial for increasing the institutional density responsible for gender equality strategies. This entails delegating activities in a concerted manner to mechanisms created in various areas of the State, not only as a way of complying with the machinery’s programme, but also so that each government department accepts independent responsibility for both political and technical issues. If it is accepted that inequality and societal changes which awaken the conscience of various actors lead to political responsibilities expressed in the different areas of public policy, this requires the machineries to develop coordination, technical support and follow-up capacities.
The creation of binding gender mainstreaming instruments is undeniably an important factor for the success of the machineries; it often happens that when the incorporation of the gender perspective or gender analysis in programme implementation or assessment is optional, it is often left out when those programmes are implemented. For example, the absence of a gender-disaggregated analysis of the State’s staffing costs means that there can be no clarity on existing differences in respect of parity. This entails the need to harmonize the principles which guide modernization and democratization processes in the countries of the region, mainly based on ideas of efficiency and reduction of the size of the State, with the principle of equality, in order to strengthen gender institutions with political roles coherently linked with policy executing teams and entities. Gender equality policies must be incorporated into each body’s institutional goals, rather than being the sole task of the machineries. This will make it possible to plan strategically, produce synergies, detect the deficits of one entity or another and identify the most outstanding policies in order to derive lessons and bring about new learning.

The coexistence of a variety of forms of State administration is a source of tension which can weaken the positive effects of the actions of machineries for the advancement of women at both national and sectoral levels. It also makes it necessary to open up spaces to the current debate, question boundaries, go beyond technical action and design strategies to deal with the multiplicity of processes involved. Another factor to be taken into account is that public administration can operate as one of the delaying processes which, together with actions by conservative forces, can slow or set back policies for equality.

The implementation of gender equality policies at different levels of the State should be seen as a process of gradual advances, of varying scale and of a cumulative nature. They will not always produce results in a linear manner, nor will they all be successful in the short term, but this reflects the creation of conditions for sustaining them. Together with the need to systematize the activities of the machineries and the various services and levels, attention should be drawn to initiatives which can become instruments to promote learning among those who are farthest behind in the process. This is also a challenge for follow-up.

Clearly, gender equality is a target which does not always reflect governments’ commitments to citizens or to the interpretative frameworks they use. Consequently, it is vital to maintain spaces for exchange and debate with the women’s movement and with feminists in order not to restrict, but rather to widen, the deliberative nature of democracy and the potential for change which can take shape in civil society, taking account of the contribution that feminists have made historically and proportionately, with their varied voices, in favour of gender equality and justice.

Up to now, the aforementioned strategies for strengthening the machineries, and for concrete implementation of policies, have coexisted harmoniously in the region and at the country level, some more out of phase than others, in a dynamic process of constructing paths towards equality, with global and regional support for the actions of the machineries based on international instruments and monitoring tools.

In short, the achievement of an open, democratic, participatory and egalitarian State, with broad recognition for the actions and meaning of the machineries, requires that any tendency to limit equality policies to social and family policy be overcome. The machineries must achieve major qualitative advances in order to affect the main area of decision-making which is the Cabinet with its sectoral committees, in order to continue forcing the pace to achieve mainstreaming and be a central element in national development strategies. Gender equality must be part of the government’s agenda so that the political will of the State is reflected effectively in the outline of future policies and is visible in the area of accountability. The task is to alter the destiny which apparently seeks to limit gender equality policies to something secondary, so that they can make a final leap forward and be included as an axis of development.
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### Annexes

#### Annex 1

**TABLE A.1**

**LATIN AMERICA, THE CARIBBEAN AND THE IBERIAN PENINSULA: MACHINERIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN, YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT OR MODIFICATION AND HIERARCHICAL POSITION**

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Office of the Director General for Human and Women’s Rights</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, External Trade and Worship (2)</td>
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<td>Ad hoc commission for the monitoring of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women</td>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>National Board for Social Action</td>
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<td>1993 - 1997</td>
<td>Ministry of Ethnic, Gender and Generational Affairs, incorporating the Office of the Under-secretary for Gender Affairs</td>
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<td>Ministry of Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>Office of the Vice-minister for Equal Opportunities</td>
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<td>Office of the President</td>
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<td>National Women’s Service</td>
<td>Responsible to the President, through the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation (MIDEPLAN)</td>
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<td>Chile</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>National Department for Gender Equity</td>
<td>Special Administrative Unit attached to the Administrative Department of the Office of the President</td>
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<td>1980</td>
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<td>National Advisory Council for Women’s Equity and Participation</td>
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<td>Presidential Department for Gender Equity</td>
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<td>Office for Programmes for Women and the Family of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport</td>
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<td>National Centre for the Development of Women and the Family</td>
<td>Ministry of Culture</td>
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<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>National Women's Institute (INAMU)</td>
<td>Autonomous and decentralized entity Council of Ministers</td>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>Federation of Cuban Women</td>
<td>Non-governmental</td>
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<td>Commission for Youth, Childhood and Equal Rights for Women (Permanent parliamentary commission)</td>
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<td>National Women’s Office</td>
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<td>National Women’s Department (DINAMU)</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Welfare</td>
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<td>Committee for Transition to the National Council for Women and Gender Equality</td>
<td>Ministry for Peoples, Social Movements and Citizen Participation</td>
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<td>National Secretariat for the Family</td>
<td>Office of the President</td>
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<td>Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (ISDEMU)</td>
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<td>Government Office for Women</td>
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<td>National Women's Institute (INAM)</td>
<td>Executive Council of representatives of government departments and civil society</td>
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<td>General Coordination of the National Women’s Programme (CONAM)</td>
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<td>Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Human Development</td>
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<td>Commission for Civil Rights</td>
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<td>Puerto Rico</td>
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<td>Dominican Republic</td>
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<td>National Women's Institute</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Culture</td>
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<td>2005 Act No. 16,320 (Article 253)</td>
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<td>Advisory Women’s Committee of the Office of the President (COFEAPRE)</td>
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<td>Women's Institute</td>
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#### THE CARIBBEAN

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<td>Bureau of Gender Affairs</td>
<td>Ministry of Home Affairs, Natural Resources, Lands and Physical Planning</td>
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<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
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<td>Directorate of Women’s Affairs</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, Women’s Affairs and Sports</td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>Focal Point for Women’s Affairs</td>
<td>Directorate of Social Affairs</td>
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<td>Bureau of Women’s Affairs</td>
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<td>Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth</td>
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<td>Women's Bureau</td>
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<td>2007 (Decree-Law 164/2007)</td>
<td>Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality</td>
<td>Office of the President of the Cabinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Minister for Equality</td>
<td>Minister for the Presidency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of information provided by national authorities, government websites and national reports on follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, 2011.

* The Women’s Institute became part of the structure of the Ministry for Health, Social Policy and Equality and subsequently of the Ministry for Equality.
Annex 2

1. Current status of statistical information

Through the consensuses adopted at the most recent regional conferences on women in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2010b; 2007; and 2004), the governments of the region have made commitments to make progress towards the empowerment of women and gender equality, taking as a basis the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (United Nations, 1995) and other regional and international agreements and reaffirming the Millennium Development Goals.

In the Quito Consensus, adopted at the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2007, the countries requested the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to create a Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, with a view to providing a useful tool to the member States to follow up on the fulfilment of the regional agenda, based on a limited, but meaningful, selection of strategic indicators. The Observatory is thus aiming to measure women’s autonomy using information from countries’ official sources of statistics.

In the Brasilia Consensus, adopted at the eleventh session of the Regional Conference on Women in 2010, countries renewed their commitment to strengthening the Observatory and, in particular, to promoting the use of its information for policy purposes, with a view to influencing countries’ practices and boosting the formulation of public policies for equality. The Consensus stresses the need to measure the gender indicators because of the urgency of equality policies, in line with the regional agenda adopted at the thirty-third session of ECLAC held from 30 May to 1 June 2010, also in Brasilia (ECLAC, 2010c).

The systematization of information and the building of gender indicators are tasks that ECLAC has been undertaking for some time in conjunction with other bodies of the United Nations system, such as the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which is now part of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The content incorporated into the Observatory is a continuation of this work, but, this time, it is being carried out within the framework of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (SCA-ECLAC), which through the statistical institutes of the region, is contributing directly to developing the methodology and improving the statistical sources.43

One of the most notable characteristics of the Observatory is that it is transmitting users’ demands to the producers of information and, for the first time, it is reaching the mainstream of regional organizations that help strengthen official statistics, such as SCA-ECLAC and the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Observatory’s indicators are organized in accordance with three interconnected and interdependent spheres of autonomy: physical, economic and decision-making (ECLAC, 2010e). The first refers to the capacity to exercise control over one’s own body (make decisions on reproductive health, freely exercise one’s sexuality and enjoy physical integrity in a life free from violence). The second autonomy is linked to the capacity to acquire and control economic resources (the possibility to earn one’s own income, control material goods and intellectual resources, and make decisions regarding family income and assets). The third refers to the possibility to participate fully in the decisions that affect collective and individual life (which involves equal representation in decision-making spheres).

43 See a systematization of these tasks and their production in ECLAC (2006) and Milosavljevic (2007).
BOX A.1
UPS AND DOWNS IN THE PRODUCTION OF STATISTICS

The signing and ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol are evidence of the political will of the governments in the region to progress towards greater gender equality and serve to facilitate compliance with the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the successive commitments adopted at the regional conferences on women in Latin America and the Caribbean. In Andorra, Portugal and Spain the legal framework of the European Union, which is aligned with the international recommendations, is in force.

Statistical information is essential for accountability, formulating and monitoring public policies and for ensuring the fulfilment of international commitments. At present, no country in the region produces all the information required to calculate the Observatory’s 11 indicators, and only six submit information for 10 indicators. The subregion that generates the least information is the Caribbean. Mexico, the countries of Central America and those of the Southern Cone have more estimated indicators. It is to be assumed that monitoring a larger number of indicators reflects greater political will and institutional capacity.

The indicators on political participation reflect the region’s democratic health, as shown by the electoral institutions that have been built and the interest shown by different social groups, such as women politicians and the media. The importance that women’s political participation has been gaining has encouraged the development of information disaggregated by sex and can be understood as a sign of a growing acceptance of female political leadership in several countries in the region. These indicators are calculated on the basis of the available information.

Although the number is increasing, there are still few countries that are in a position to provide information for the economic autonomy indicators. This is the case for the indicator on time use, which requires special surveys to be carried out. It is therefore significant to highlight that nine countries (Brazil, 2008; Colombia, 2007; Costa Rica, 2004; Ecuador, 2008; Guatemala, 2006; Honduras, 2009; Mexico, 2009; Peru, 2008; and Uruguay, 2007) have already carried out surveys or included sections in surveys on time use recently, and several countries are pursuing the measurement of the monetary value of unpaid work (Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico, among others).

For various reasons, it is difficult to access information on physical autonomy, especially in connection with maternal mortality and violence. With regard to violence, over the last two years the United Nations Statistical Commission, under the leadership of Mexico, has agreed on a number of critical indicators and an international questionnaire for measuring violence against women.


The structure of the gender equality indicators must reconcile the need to express the complexity and diversity of the real situations on the one hand and, on the other, the need for data that is simple enough to be readily understood, disseminated and used.

In addition, there is the issue of comparability, both between countries and between different periods, when most of the available sources lack a gender perspective and contain methodological biases that still need to be changed in censuses, surveys and administrative
registers. When taking a regional view with regard to trying to measure progress and setbacks, the inherent limitations of any attempt at conciliation should be taken into account. In other words, the historical, political and territorial heterogeneity of the populations of the subregions and different countries must be borne in mind.

There are different types of political systems and social protection policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Caribbean countries, for instance, can be characterized as small territories with smaller populations than the other countries of the region and they are exposed to various kinds of disaster with greater intensity and frequency.

Similar diversity is found among women. The challenge is therefore to accurately represent the reality and the needs of different groups, such as women living in rural areas — whose situation has reached a critical point owing to the food crisis — and indigenous and Afro-descendent women.

The Gender Equality Observatory also covers Andorra, Portugal and Spain. Although these countries tend to represent a yardstick in the comparative analyses between the countries of the region and those of the Iberian peninsula, they have a shared history with Latin America that brings them closer together: a common past marked by colonization and the transmission of cultural values. The key role of religious institutions and the persistence of macho and patriarchal dynamics are examples of the characteristics they have in common. Another shared characteristic is the flow of persons, with migrants in each direction depending on the historical trend and economic cycles. In some cases, reference will be made to the indicators available for the Iberian peninsula with a view to identifying convergences or differences between those indicators and those for the region.

| TABLE A.2 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sphere of autonomy</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>The Caribbean</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>Iberian peninsula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical autonomy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s deaths at the hands of their intimate partner or former partner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maternal mortality</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teenage maternity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unmet demand for family planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic autonomy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individuals without an income of their own</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total work time (paid and unpaid)</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>12</td>
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</table>

(continued)
Table A.2 (concluded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sphere of autonomy</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>The Caribbean</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>Iberian peninsula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decision-making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Executive power: women in ministerial cabinet</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>positions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legislative power: women in the national</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>legislative body</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judicial power: women judges in the highest</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>court or supreme court</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elected mayors who are female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elected city council members who are female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Number of countries in the Gender</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equality Observatory</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of information from the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.

2. Methodological considerations for the indicators of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean

a) Women’s deaths at the hands of their intimate partner or former partner

The processes for collecting information on this issue are still under development. The Observatory receives information that cannot be compared because, as the phenomenon has only recently been recognized, the priority is to shine the spotlight on the issue at the national level as a way of protecting the victims and as a preliminary step towards the periodic systematization and gathering of data. Taking these considerations into account, the increase in cases could be interpreted as a real increase or an improved registration of cases, or both. Nevertheless, considering that the number of cases is probably still underreported, the problem is extremely serious.

Most countries in the world do not keep official records on the number of women killed for gender reasons. There is also a dearth of adequate administrative records on other forms of violence against women and, furthermore, there is no integration of the various health, police and legal information systems. The little information that is available is based on what has been published in the media.

In some countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, governments are starting to collect data systematically. To date, the greatest efforts have been made by the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Peru, but another six countries are making progress in recording the deaths of women through various State authorities (Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay).
# Annex 3

**TABLE A.3**  
**LATIN AMERICA, THE CARIBBEAN AND THE IBERIAN PENINSULA: COUNTRIES WITH LEGISLATION ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, BY LANDMARK IN THE WOMEN’S RIGHTS AGENDA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Legislation protecting against domestic violence</th>
<th>Legislation establishing femicide as a criminal offence</th>
<th>Legislation on offences against sexual freedom</th>
<th>Legislation against sexual harassment</th>
<th>SIGNATURE Optional Protocol to the Convention</th>
<th>RATIFICATION Optional Protocol to the Convention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latin America</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td></td>
<td>1987</td>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>1997/2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2001</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caribbean</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anguilla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aruba</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1991</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<td>1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>British Virgin Islands</td>
<td>1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cayman Islands</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td></td>
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(continued)
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<th></th>
<th>Legislation protecting against domestic violence</th>
<th>Legislation establishing femicide as a criminal offence</th>
<th>Legislation on offences against sexual freedom</th>
<th>Legislation against sexual harassment</th>
<th>SIGNATURE Optional Protocol to the Convention a</th>
<th>RATIFICATION Optional Protocol to the Convention a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caribbean</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1991/1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>1995/2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Saint Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>2000/2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Saint Lucia</td>
<td>1995</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2006</td>
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<td>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
<td>1984/1995</td>
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<td>Suriname</td>
<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iberian peninsula</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andorra</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.

a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.