



Regional Conference
on Women in
Latin America and the Caribbean

WHAT IS THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN?



Ministerio de las Mujeres,
Géneros y Diversidad
Argentina



What is the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean?

The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, one of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), is the foremost intergovernmental forum of the United Nations on women's rights and gender equality in the region. Its sessions are organized by ECLAC, as secretariat of the Conference, and since 2020 in coordination with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). It is convened on a regular basis, at least every three years, to analyse the status of women's autonomy and rights at the regional and subregional levels, present recommendations regarding public policies on gender equality, and undertake periodic assessments of the policies, programmes and initiatives implemented in fulfilment of regional and international agreements on the subject.

The first session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, held in Havana in 1977, was convened by the secretariat of ECLAC, as decided at the seventeenth session of the Commission, two years after the World Conference of the International Women's Year (Mexico, 1975) and in the framework of the United Nations Decade for Women.

Thus far, the member States of ECLAC have held 15 sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Over the past 45 years, governments have agreed a meaningful, progressive and comprehensive Regional Gender Agenda, which guides countries' public policies for gender equality in law and in practice, fulfilling the rights and autonomy of women, adolescent girls and young girls, in all their diversity.

The Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 was adopted by the governments at the thirteenth session of the Regional Conference (2016). It represents a tool for overcoming the structural challenges to gender equality and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The Regional Agenda is closely interlinked with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to set the course to follow for development with sustainability and gender equality.

By virtue of the Santiago Commitment, adopted at the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (2020), the governments reaffirmed the commitments assumed in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after its adoption and, looking to the future, agreed upon new commitments to respond in a forward-looking and innovative manner to the emerging challenges facing women in changing economic, demographic, climatic and technological scenarios. The governments also agreed to implement gender-sensitive countercyclical policies, in order to mitigate the impact of economic crises and recessions on women's lives and promote regulatory frameworks and policies to galvanize the economy in key sectors, including the care economy (Santiago Commitment, para. 24).

In the Buenos Aires Commitment, adopted at the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (2022), care is placed at the centre of a new pattern of development that prioritizes the sustainability of life and of the planet. Governments called to advance recovery plans with proactive measures to achieve substantive equality that foster comprehensive care systems, decent work and the full, significant and equal participation of women in positions of leadership in strategic sectors of the economy for a transformative recovery with gender equality aimed at the sustainability of life and for the transition to a care society (Buenos Aires Commitment, para. 6). Furthermore, the Buenos Aires Commitment recognizes care as a right to provide and receive care and to exercise self-care based on the principles of equality, universality and social and gender co-responsibility, and therefore, as a responsibility that must be shared by people of all sectors of society, families, communities, businesses and the State (Buenos Aires Commitment, para. 8).

Who convenes the sessions of the Regional Conference?

ECLAC has been given the mandate to convene the member States and associate members to sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission, no later than six weeks prior to each session of the Regional Conference, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC sends out invitations to the member countries and associate members of the Commission to participate in the deliberations. Other States Members of the United Nations and representatives of other bodies and programmes forming part of the United Nations system are invited to attend as observers, as are representatives of intergovernmental organizations and of non-governmental organizations enjoying consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and special guests.

Where will the next Regional Conference take place?

Pursuant to paragraph 54 of the Buenos Aires Commitment adopted by ECLAC member States at the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (2022), Mexico will host the sixteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in 2025.

Who attends the sessions?

The sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean are attended by representatives of the member States and associate members of the Commission. Representatives of States enjoying consultative status attend as observers.¹

In addition, the sessions are attended by observers from United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and other international organizations, intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organizations, and particularly by women's and feminist movements.

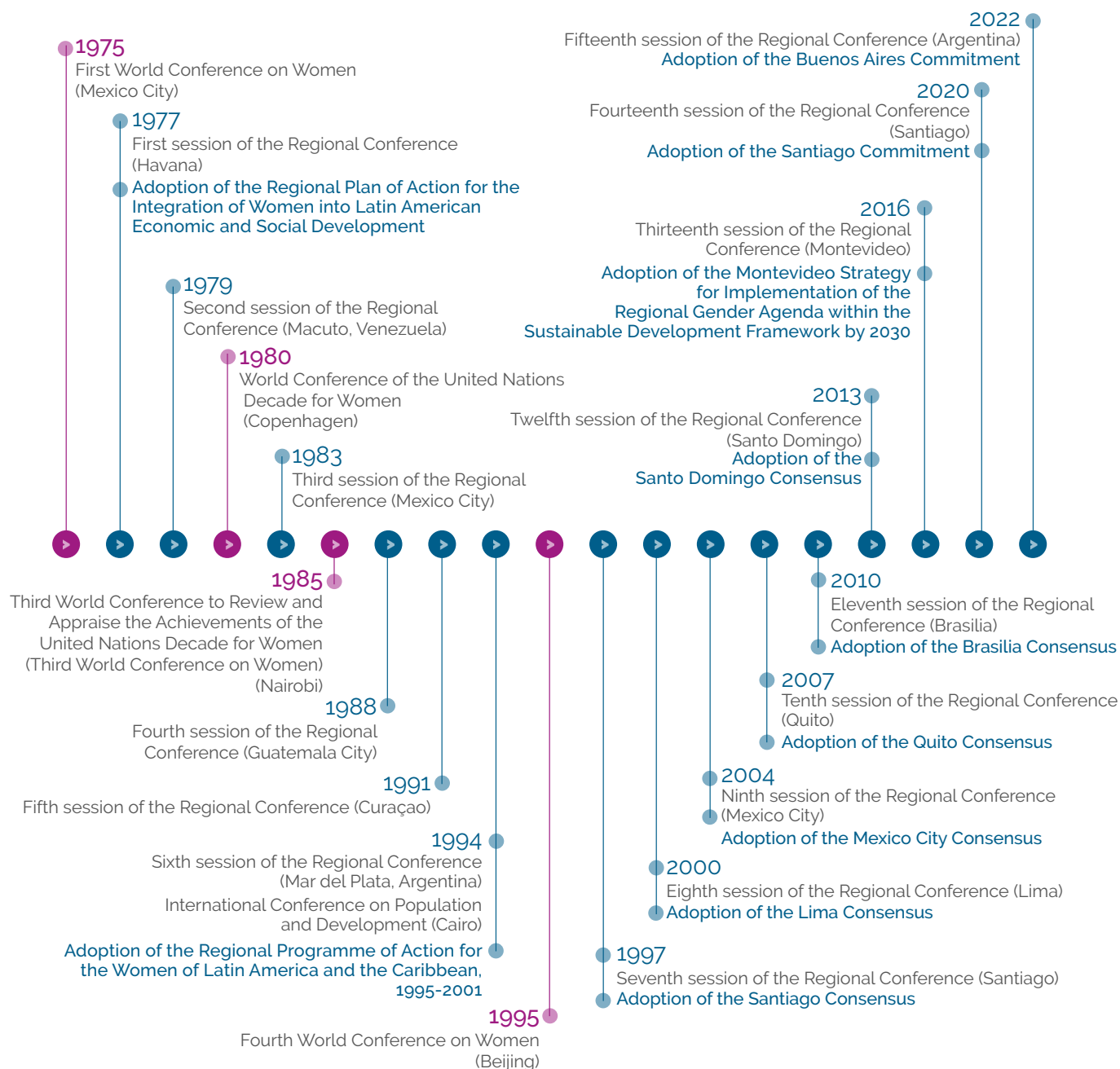
Who are the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference?

The member States of the Commission elect Presiding Officers at each session of the Regional Conference. The Presiding Officers usually include a Chair (this office is customarily held by the host country) and several Vice-Chairs. The member States elect the Presiding Officers for each session of the Conference based on the principles of rotation of duties and of adequate representation of the various subregions.

The Presiding Officers of the Conference serve as a liaison between the governments—particularly their national machinery for the advancement of women—and the secretariat of ECLAC, and meet between sessions of the Regional Conference in order to maintain a permanent mechanism for action. Accordingly, there have been 64 meetings of the Presiding Officers since 1978.

¹ States that are not members of the Commission hold consultative observer status.

Global milestones and landmarks of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean



Which countries serve as Presiding Officers?

The Presiding Officers who will serve until the next session of the Conference were elected at the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Buenos Aires in November 2022. They are as follows:

Chair	Argentina
Vice-Chairs	Barbados
	Bolivia (Plurinacional State of)
	Chile
	Colombia
	Costa Rica
	Cuba
	Dominicana Republic
	Ecuador
	Honduras
	Mexico
	Peru
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
	Uruguay
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

At the sixteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which will take place in Mexico in 2025, the member States will have the opportunity to nominate and elect the new Presiding Officers.

Who prepares the documents?

The position paper for the Conference is prepared by the secretariat of ECLAC. Preliminary versions of the document are submitted to the member countries for their consideration at subregional preparatory meetings. The inputs from these meetings are included in the final version of the document, which serves as a basis for the deliberations at the session of the Conference.

The secretariat also prepares supporting documentation, either alone or in collaboration with other agencies in the United Nations system or academic institutions from the region.

How can non-governmental organizations participate in the sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the meetings of its Presiding Officers?

Non-governmental organizations may participate in the sessions of the Regional Conference and the meetings of its Presiding Officers in the following ways:

- As part of their national delegations, as arranged at the country level and approved by the respective Government.
- As organizations holding consultative status with the United Nations, in accordance with the rules of the Economic and Social Council.
- As observers, in the case of regional or subregional networks that are recognized for their work in follow-up of the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda.

What is the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean?

The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean is a tool created by ECLAC to respond to the agreements reached by ECLAC member States at the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Quito, 2007). The purpose of the Observatory is to contribute to the strengthening of national machineries for the advancement of women, to make official information from the governments of the region available to the public, and to facilitate the monitoring of international and regional agreements on women's rights and gender equality. It gathers up-to-date figures and information on various topics relevant to decision-making and policymaking, and coordinates the efforts of other United Nations and cooperation agencies, as well as those of the region's governments.

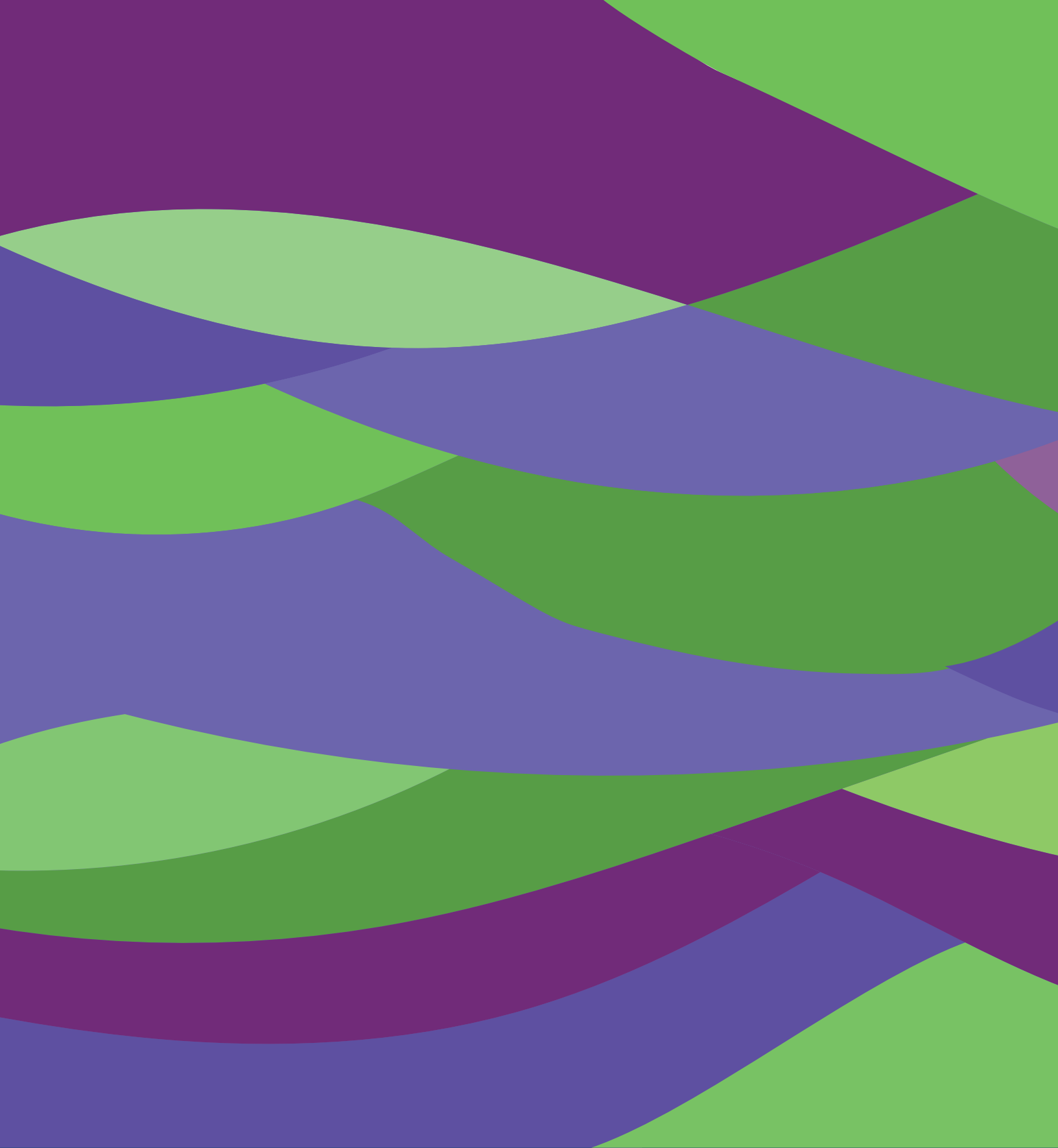
For more information about the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean see [online]

<https://www.cepal.org/en/subsidiary-bodies/regional-conference-women-latin-america-and-caribbean>

<https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/gender-affairs>

<https://www.cepal.org/en/subsidiary-bodies/regional-conference-women-latin-america-and-caribbean/regional-gender-agenda>

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Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
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