



*Women's autonomy in the digital economy and the information society*

# XII

**Regional Conference  
ON WOMEN**  
in Latin America and the Caribbean

Santo Domingo, 15-18 October 2013

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION AUGUST 2013**





## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
1. What is the Regional Conference?.....	3
2. Who convenes the sessions? .....	3
3. Where are the sessions held? .....	4
4. What is the theme of the twelfth session of the Regional Conference?.....	4
5. Who attends the sessions?.....	4
6. Who are the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference? .....	5
7. Which countries have been represented by the Presiding Officers? .....	5
8. Who prepares the documents? .....	9
9. How is the session organized? .....	9
10. Overview of regional and international activities conducted in recent decades .....	11
11. Activities of non-governmental organizations related to the twelfth session of the Regional Conference .....	15



## 1. What is the Regional Conference?

The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean is a subsidiary body of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) which is convened on a regular basis, every three years, to identify women's needs at the regional and subregional levels, present recommendations, undertake periodic assessments of the activities carried out in fulfilment of regional and international plans and agreements on the subject, and serve as a forum for discussion of relevant issues.

### Permanent auxiliary bodies of ECLAC:

The Commission, which holds a session once every two years, has established the following permanent bodies:

- Committee of the Whole
- Committee of High-level Government Experts
- Central American Economic Cooperation Committee
- Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee
- Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Regional Council for Planning
- Statistical Conference of the Americas
- Regional Council for Planning
- Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean

To date, the States members of ECLAC have held 11 sessions of the Regional Conference on the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean. The locations and dates of these sessions have been the following: Havana, Cuba (1977), Macuto, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (1979), Mexico City (1983), Guatemala City (1988), Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles (1991), Mar del Plata, Argentina (1994), Santiago, Chile (1997), Lima, Peru (2000), Mexico City (2004), Quito, Ecuador (2007) and Brasilia, Brazil (2010).

## 2. Who convenes the sessions?

ECLAC has been given the mandate to convene the member States to sessions of the Regional Conference.

In accordance with the corresponding regulations, 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 nongovernmental organizations enjoying consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and special guests.



### 3. Where are the sessions held?

Generally, a member country of ECLAC offers to host the conference. On this occasion, the Government of the Dominican Republic will host the session, which is to be held from 15 to 18 October 2013 in Santo Domingo.

The Regional Conference will take place at the Hotel Hilton Santo Domingo, in the city of Santo Domingo.

Hilton Santo Domingo  
Address: Av. George Washington # 500  
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic  
[www.santodomingo.hilton.com](http://www.santodomingo.hilton.com)

### 4. What is the theme of the twelfth session of the Regional Conference?

The countries represented at the forty-sixth meeting of Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference, held in Santiago in November 2011, adopted the proposal submitted by the Dominican Republic, the countries of the Council of Ministers of Women's Affairs of Central America (COMMCA) and Mexico, that the twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean should focus on gender equality, the empowerment of women and information and communications technologies.

### 5. Who attends the sessions?

The sessions of the Regional Conference are attended by representatives of the member States and associate members of the Commission. Representatives of States enjoying consultative status<sup>1</sup> attend as observers.

In addition, the sessions are attended by observers from United Nations programmes and bodies,<sup>2</sup> specialized agencies and other autonomous organizations within the system,<sup>3</sup> intergovernmental organizations<sup>4</sup> and non-governmental organizations holding category I or category II consultative status

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<sup>1</sup> States Members of the United Nations which do not belong to the Commission and States which are not members of the United Nations hold consultative status and attend the sessions as observers.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Food Programme (WFP).

<sup>3</sup> These institutions include International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO).

<sup>4</sup> Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Inter-American Commission of Women (IACW), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Latin American Social Sciences Council (CLACSO), Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIDH), Organization of American States (OAS), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Latin American Parliament.



with the Economic and Social Council. In the interests of the member States, ECLAC invites other institutions to attend which are in a position to provide inputs in their fields; in extending such invitations, priority is given to regional or subregional organizations.

## 6. Who are the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference?

The Commission elects Presiding Officers at the beginning of each session of the Regional Conference. The secretariat convenes a meeting of the heads of delegation prior to the opening of the regular session for this purpose. The Presiding Officers usually include a Chair (this office is customarily held by the host country), two Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur. The members chosen to represent their governments as Presiding Officers continue to do so until their successors are elected.

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. In order to maintain a permanent mechanism for action in the framework of the Regional Plan of Action, it was established that the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference would continue their work during the intervals between sessions of the Conference and would serve as a liaison between the Governments and the secretariat of ECLAC. Accordingly, the Presiding Officers meet twice a year and have held 48 such meetings since 1978.

## 7. Which countries have been represented by the Presiding Officers?

The Presiding Officers for the sessions of the Regional Conference have been as follows:

### Eleventh session Brasilia, Brazil, 2010

Chair:	Brazil
Vice-Chairs:	Antigua and Barbuda
	Argentina
	Barbados
	Chile
	Costa Rica
	Cuba
	Ecuador
	El Salvador
	Spain
	Guatemala
	Jamaica
	Panama
	Paraguay
	Peru
	Dominican Republic
	Trinidad and Tobago
	Uruguay
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Rapporteur:	Mexico



Background information for the twelfth session  
of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin  
America and the Caribbean

**Tenth session**

Quito, Ecuador, 2007

<b>Presidencia:</b>	Ecuador
<b>Vice-Chairs:</b>	Netherlands Antilles
	Argentina
	Brazil
	Colombia
	Costa Rica
	Cuba
	Spain
	Guatemala
	Haiti
	Honduras
	Turks and Caicos Islands
	Jamaica
	Mexico
	Panama
	Paraguay
	Puerto Rico
	Dominican Republic
	Suriname
	Uruguay
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Chile

**Ninth session**

Mexico City, Mexico, 2004

<b>Chair:</b>	Mexico
<b>Vice-Chairs:</b>	Netherlands Antilles
	Argentina
	Brazil
	Chile
	Colombia
	Cuba
	Guatemala
	Honduras
	Paraguay
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Ecuador



Background information for the twelfth session  
of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin  
America and the Caribbean

**Eighth session**  
Lima, Peru, 2000

<b>Chair:</b>	Peru
<b>Vice-Chairs:</b>	Antigua and Barbuda
	Netherlands Antilles
	Argentina
	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
	Brazil
	Chile
	Costa Rica
	Cuba
	Ecuador
	El Salvador
	Paraguay
	Suriname
	Uruguay
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Mexico

**Seventh session**  
Santiago, Chile, 1997

<b>Chair:</b>	Chile
<b>Vice-Chairs:</b>	Netherlands Antilles
	Argentina
	Barbados
	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
	Brazil
	Cuba
	El Salvador
	Paraguay
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Mexico

**Sixth session**  
Mar del Plata, Argentina 1994

<b>Chair:</b>	Argentina
<b>Vice-Chairs:</b>	Netherlands Antilles
	Barbados
	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
	Chile
	Cuba
	Ecuador
	Honduras
	Uruguay
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Mexico



Background information for the twelfth session  
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**Fifth session**

Curaçao, 1991

Chair:	Netherlands Antilles
Vice-Chairs:	Chile
	Cuba
	Guatemala
	Mexico
	Saint Kitts y Nevis
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Rapporteur:	Argentina

**Fourth session**

Guatemala City, Guatemala, 1988

Chair:	Guatemala
Vice-Chairs:	Netherlands Antilles
	Argentina
	Cuba
Rapporteur:	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

**Third session**

Mexico City, Mexico, 1983

Chair:	Mexico
Vice-Chairs:	Ecuador
	Guyana
	Panama
Rapporteur:	Argentina

**Second session**

Macuto, Venezuela, 1979

Chair:	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Vice-Chairs:	Brazil
	Colombia
	Cuba
	Jamaica
	Mexico
	Uruguay
Rapporteur:	Costa Rica

**First session**

Havana, Cuba, 1977

Chair:	Cuba
Vice-Chairs:	Jamaica
	Mexico
Rapporteur:	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)





### **8. Who prepares the documents?**

The position paper for the Conference is prepared by the secretariat of ECLAC. Preliminary versions of the document were submitted to the member countries for their consideration on three occasions: the subregional meeting for Central America and Mexico preparatory to the twelfth session of the Regional Conference (San José, Costa Rica, 8 and 9 May 2013); the subregional meeting for South America preparatory to the twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Montevideo, Uruguay, 21 and 22 May 2013); and the subregional Caribbean preparatory meeting for the twelfth session of the Conference and the Expert Group Meeting on Unpaid Work and Gender in the Caribbean (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 8 and 9 August 2013, respectively). The inputs from these meetings will be included in the final version of the document, which will serve as a basis for the deliberations to be held at this session.

### **9. How is the session organized?**

The Government of the Dominican Republic and ECLAC are coordinating the organization of the twelfth session of the Regional Conference. The organization of work, which may be updated at any time, is attached.



Background information for the twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

Monday 14 October	Tuesday 15 October	Wednesday 16 October	Thursday 17 October	Friday 18 October
	8 - 8.45 a.m. Registration			
	8.45 - 9 a.m. Room 1 Entry to conference hall			
	9 - 9.15 a.m. Election of officers and adoption of the agenda	9 - 11 a.m.  Room 1 Panel 1: Work and employment in ICTs	9 - 11 a.m. Room 1 Panel 7: Women in business	9 - 11 a.m.  Room 1
	9.15 - 10.15 a.m. Opening ceremony of the twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean	Room 2 Panel 2: Policies on access to information and communications technologies	Room 2 Panel 8: Access to digital assets, land and credit	Plenary meeting
	10.15 - 10.45 a.m. Cultural activity			
	10.45 - 11.15 a.m. Coffee break	11 - 11.30 a.m. Coffee break	11 - 11.30 a.m. Coffee break	11 - 11.30 a.m. Coffee break
	11.15 - 11.30 a.m.  Room 1 Reading of civil society declaration	11.30 a.m. - 1 p.m.  Room 1 Panel 1: Work and employment in ICTs (continued)	11.30 a.m. - 1 p.m.  Room 1 Panel 7: Women in business (continued)	11.30 a.m. - 1.30 p.m.  Room 1 Plenary meeting (continued)
	11.30 a.m. - 1 p.m.  Room 1 Presentation of position document	Room 2 Panel 2: Policies on access to information and communications technologies (continued)	Room 2 Panel 8: Access to digital assets, land and credit (continued)	
1 - 4 p.m.  Twenty-first meeting of Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies of the United Nations System on the Advancement of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean	1 - 2.45 p.m.  Lunch break	1 - 2.45 p.m.  Lunch break	1 - 2.45 p.m.  Lunch break	1.30 - 3.30 p.m.  Lunch break
		1.05 - 2.35 p.m. Side event	1.05 - 2.35 p.m. Side event	
	2.45 - 4.30 p.m.  Room 1 Round table: Production development and equality	2.45 - 4.30 p.m.  Room 1 Panel 3: Challenges and risks of ICTs for equality  Room 2 Panel 4: Enterprise in the production sector	2.45 - 4.30 p.m.  Room 1 Round table: Beijing+20: outlook and challenges	3.30 - 4.30 p.m.  Consideration and adoption of the Santo Domingo Consensus
4 - 8 p.m. Registration	4.30 - 5 p.m. Coffee break	4.30 - 5 p.m. Coffee break	4.30 - 5 p.m. Coffee break	4.30 - 5 p.m. Coffee break
5 - 7 p.m. Forty-ninth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean	5 - 6 p.m.  Room 1 Round table: Production development and equality (continued)	5 - 6.15 p.m.  Room 1 Panel 5: Statistics and indicators on ICTs and gender  Room 2 Panel 6: Women and science	5 - 6 p.m.  Room 1 Round table: Beijing+20: outlook and challenges (continued)	5 - 6.30 p.m.  Closing ceremony
7 - 8 p.m. Meeting of heads of delegation delegación				



## 10. Overview of regional and international activities conducted in recent decades

### Regional level

In March 1973, ECLAC adopted resolution 321(XV) encouraging the “participation of women in Latin American development” at its fifteenth session, held in Quito. The secretariat was also asked to prepare a number of studies on the status of women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In May 1975 in Caracas, the first baseline studies on the subject were presented at a regional seminar for Latin America on the integration of women into development, with special emphasis on demographic factors. A compilation of studies and reports served as the basis for the book entitled *Mujeres en América Latina: aportes para una discusión*, which ECLAC presented at the first World Conference on Women.

In June 1977, Havana hosted the first session of the Regional Conference, at which the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development was adopted. It was ratified at the eleventh special session of the ECLAC Committee of the Whole.

In November 1979, the second session of the Regional Conference was held in Macuto, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. During the session the participants evaluated the progress made towards fulfilling the Regional Plan of Action and drew up recommendations in that connection.

In August 1983, the third session of the Regional Conference was held in Mexico City. At that session the participants evaluated the progress made towards fulfilling the Regional Plan of Action, made recommendations in that regard and embarked upon activities at the regional level in preparation for the Third World Conference on Women.

In November 1984, the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean in Preparation for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women was held in Havana. This preparatory meeting was organized by the Branch for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the secretariat of ECLAC.

In September 1988, the fourth session of the Regional Conference was held in Guatemala City. Among other matters, the participants analysed the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and their implementation at the national, subregional and regional levels.

In September 1991, the fifth session of the Regional Conference was held in Curaçao. In one of the resolutions adopted at that session, the Regional Conference affirmed that “the changes experienced by the region since then [since the adoption of the Regional Plan of Action in 1977] have been radical ones, requiring an analysis of the future from a new perspective, including a reorientation of concepts and programmes relating to women”. Accordingly, it recommended that a new regional plan of action for the integration of women into Latin American and Caribbean economic and social development should be prepared to serve as a new regional instrument in preparation for the world conference in 1995.

In September 1994, the sixth session of the Regional Conference was held in Mar del Plata, Argentina. The Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001 was



adopted at the Conference, which also served as a preparatory meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

In November 1997, the seventh session of the Regional Conference was held in Santiago, Chile. The regional process of analysis and follow-up in connection with the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, and the Beijing Platform for Action was put in motion. The Santiago Consensus was adopted.

In February 2000, the eighth session of the Regional Conference was held in Lima, Peru, at which the member countries made a commitment in the Lima Consensus to strengthen implementation of the Regional Programme of Action beyond the year 2001.

In June 2004, the ninth session of the Regional Conference was held in Mexico City and the participants continued the regional process of analysis and follow-up of the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001 and the Beijing Platform for Action and adopted the Mexico City Consensus.

In August 2007, the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Quito. The participants in this session analysed contributions made by women to the economy and to social protection, especially in relation to unpaid work, as well as political participation and gender parity in decision-making processes at all levels, which the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean recognized as fundamental issues. The tenth session concluded with the adoption of the Quito Consensus which, among other matters, welcomed and accepted the Government of Brazil's offer to host the eleventh session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In fulfilment of the Quito Consensus, the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean was presented, in July 2009.

The eleventh session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Brasilia in July 2010. On this occasion, the Conference examined the region's achievements and challenges in terms of gender equality, with particular reference to women's autonomy and economic empowerment, on the basis of examination of the main advances and challenges as regards the fulfilment of commitments undertaken at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the sessions of the Regional Conference on Women. The proposals of ECLAC were set forth in the document *What kind of State? What kind of equality?*

The eleventh session of the Regional Conference concluded with the adoption of the Brasilia Consensus, which addresses eight areas of work and which, among other matters, welcomed and accepted the Government of the Dominican Republic's offer to host the twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In November 2011, the forty-sixth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Santiago. On this occasion, the Presiding Officers adopted the agenda for the twelfth session of the Regional Conference, which was based on gender equality, women's empowerment and information and communications technologies.



In February 2012, the Government of the Dominican Republic and ECLAC met in Santo Domingo to begin preparations for the twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In May 2012, the forty-seventh meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference was held in Panama City. On that occasion, the Presiding Officers approved the schedule of work for the twelfth session of the Conference and reviewed progress regarding the preparation of the respective position document.

In November 2012, at their forty-eighth meeting, held in Santiago, the Presiding Officers examined studies and inputs for the position document to be presented at the twelfth session of the Regional Conference.

Between May and August 2013, subregional meetings were held in preparation of the twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### International level

In January 1974, the Commission on the Status of Women decided to convene a world conference in Mexico City in 1975 to mark International Women's Year.

Between 19 June and 2 July 1975, the first meeting at the international level, the World Conference of the International Women's Year, was held in Mexico City. Its objectives were as follows: (a) to evaluate the performance of the United Nations system with respect to the implementation of the recommendations formulated by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; (b) to analyse new ways of promoting women's full participation in the development process, with particular attention to women in rural areas; (c) to develop a plan of action for enhancing the contribution of women to the achievement of the objectives of the Second United Nations Development Decade; and (d) to recognize women's contribution to the attainment of world peace. The World Conference concluded with the adoption of a World Plan of Action.

In December 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

In July 1980, the second international meeting, the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, was held in Copenhagen. The Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women was adopted on this occasion.

In June 1985, the first edition of the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development was published and the Third World Conference on Women was held in Nairobi, Kenya, for the purpose of developing specific action proposals. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women were adopted at the Conference.

In December 1990, General Assembly resolution 45/129, Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/12 and Commission on the Status of Women resolution 36/8A on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and preparations for the fourth world conference, including the Platform for Action, were adopted.



In September 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, China. The Platform for Action was adopted at this meeting.

In March 1999, the Commission on the Status of Women held its forty-third session and approved the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was subsequently adopted at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The draft optional protocol establishes a procedure for submitting a petition under the Convention and a procedure for the investigation of serious or systematic violations of the human rights articulated therein.

In June 2000, a special session was held of the United Nations General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”. It was held five years after the Fourth World Conference, and also known as the Beijing five-year review. The progress achieved in the application of the Nairobi Strategies (1985) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) was reviewed and evaluated at this session. New actions and initiatives were approved for 2000 and subsequent years.

In September 2000, the Millennium Declaration was adopted at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, also known as the “Millennium Assembly”. On the basis of this Declaration, eight development goals were devised and the countries resolved to take new measures and combine their efforts in the fight against poverty, illiteracy, hunger, lack of education, gender inequality, infant and maternal mortality, disease and environmental degradation.

Between 28 February and 11 March 2005, the Commission on the Status of Women held its forty-ninth session. This session was devoted to consideration of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the Special Session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century” and to an examination of the current forward-looking challenges and strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girl children.

In March 2010, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held its fifty-fourth session, which coincided with the 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcomes of the special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”.

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

In February 2011, UN-Women held the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which was devoted to the issue of women’s economic empowerment.

The hundredth anniversary of the International Women’s Day was celebrated on 8 March.

In February 2012, the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women was held. This session of the Commission was devoted to the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges.



## **11. Activities of non-governmental organizations related to the twelfth session of the Regional Conference**

The Research Centre for Feminist Action (CIPAF) will act as focal point for the participation of civil society in the Conference process.

Contact:           cipaf@codetel.net.do  
                          www.cipaf.org.do

Non-governmental organizations may participate in the sessions of the Regional Conference as follows:

- As part of their national delegations, as arranged at the country level and approved by the respective Governments.
- As organizations recognized as having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.
- As observers specially invited by ECLAC in the case of regional or subregional networks that are recognized for their work in implementing the Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean and the Beijing Platform for Action.

For further information please contact:  
Division for Gender Affairs [dag@cepal.org](mailto:dag@cepal.org) • [www.cepal.org/mujer](http://www.cepal.org/mujer)  
Twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean  
[www.eclac.org/12conferenciamujer](http://www.eclac.org/12conferenciamujer)