



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

# Gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean, a goal ECLAC is striving to achieve

In March 1973, at the fifteenth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the governments of the region instructed the secretariat to draw up a study on the participation of women in the development of the region and the measures required to eliminate all forms of discrimination and address the lack of educational, work-related and economic opportunities.

This marked the beginning of a long and fruitful effort by ECLAC to build knowledge, systematize information, develop concepts and propose changes with a view to achieving the participation of women, on equal terms, in the development of societies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

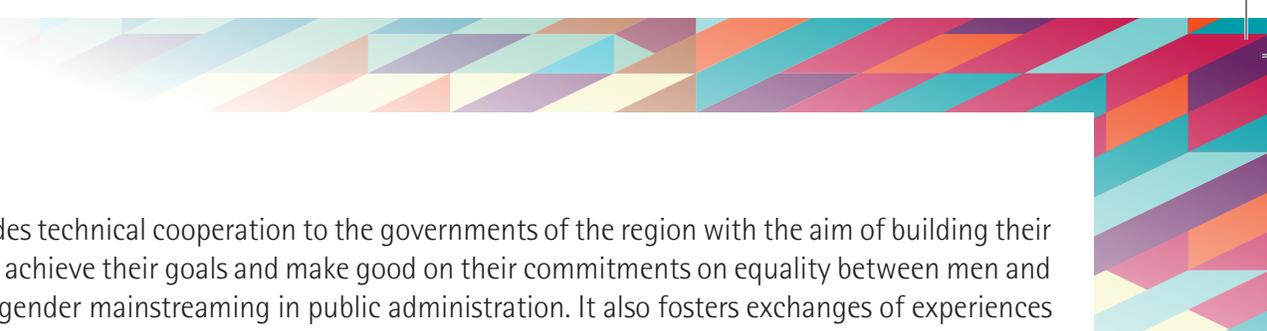
From the first session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Cuba in 1977, to the twelfth session, in the Dominican Republic in 2013, regional agreements have been adopted as part of a gender equality agenda that has gradually grown to encompass women's physical, economic and decision-making autonomy. The Regional Conference, a subsidiary body of ECLAC, is the foremost intergovernmental forum on women in the region and provides a valuable platform for dialogue and consensus.

The three documents making up the equality trilogy ECLAC has presented at its last three sessions afford pride of place to gender equality. This is particularly true in the case of *Compacts for Equality: Towards a Sustainable Future*,<sup>1</sup> presented at the thirty-fifth session of ECLAC, held in Lima in 2014, when the governments reaffirmed the importance of women's economic autonomy in development.

## What does ECLAC do on gender issues?

ECLAC serves, via its Division for Gender Affairs, as technical secretariat for the governments of the region for the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. ECLAC thus forges links between governments, civil society, women's movements and experts with a view to realizing the regional gender equality agenda. The agreements adopted are enshrined in consensuses, the most recent being the Santo Domingo Consensus (2013) (see [online] [http://www.cepal.org/12conferenciamujer/noticias/paginas/5/49995/PLE\\_CRM.12-Santo\\_Domingo\\_Consensus.pdf](http://www.cepal.org/12conferenciamujer/noticias/paginas/5/49995/PLE_CRM.12-Santo_Domingo_Consensus.pdf)).

<sup>1</sup> LC/G.2586(SES.35/3).



ECLAC provides technical cooperation to the governments of the region with the aim of building their capacities to achieve their goals and make good on their commitments on equality between men and women and gender mainstreaming in public administration. It also fosters exchanges of experiences among countries in the region.

One key area is its work to promote dialogue between machineries for the advancement of women and national statistical offices to produce gender statistics and indicators, as well as with ministries of economic affairs to further women's economic autonomy.

The Division for Gender Affairs provides distance courses in conjunction with the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) of ECLAC in such areas as gender statistics and indicators, time-use surveys, the measurement of violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean, public policies on care and gender and information and communications technology.

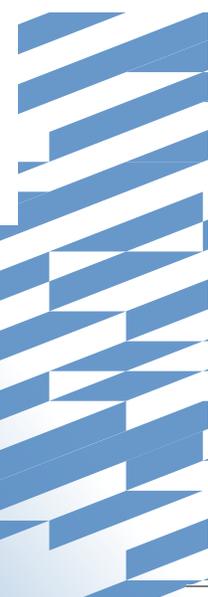
ECLAC also conducts research and generates knowledge with a view to promoting gender equality in public policymaking. Its publications include the *Asuntos de Género* series and the range of books prepared by the Division for Gender Affairs.

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

The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, established following a request made by governments in the Quito Consensus in 2007, has become the main reference point for gender statistics and indicators, as well as studies, analysis and public policies on gender in the region. The Observatory maintains an extensive repository of laws, policies and reports. Its conceptual approach is grounded in autonomy for women, a fundamental factor in ensuring their human rights within a context of full equality, which consists in: control over their own bodies (physical autonomy), generation of their own income and resources (economic autonomy) and full participation in decisions that affect their lives individually and collectively (decision-making autonomy) (see [online] <http://www.cepal.org/oig/default.asp?idioma=IN>).

## Gender mainstreaming within ECLAC

A great many advances have been made in the ongoing process of gender mainstreaming within ECLAC, such as the inclusion of the gender perspective in its various areas of work, particularly with respect to statistics, population and development. The dedicated gender mainstreaming strategy implemented since 2013 has lent particular impetus to the process. Ever-closer coordination between the various subsidiary bodies (regional conferences) has been a further driving force for progress and shall be a major area of focus in tackling the challenges of the post-2015 development agenda.



### To find out more about the work of ECLAC

For further information on what the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) does on this and other issues, go to: [www.cepal.org/en](http://www.cepal.org/en), [www.cepal.org/oig/default.asp?idioma=IN](http://www.cepal.org/oig/default.asp?idioma=IN), [www.cepal.org/en/work-areas/gender-affairs](http://www.cepal.org/en/work-areas/gender-affairs).