



XV Regional Conference
on **Women in**
Latin America and the Caribbean
Buenos Aires, 7–11 November 2022

The care society

A horizon for sustainable recovery with gender equality

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Executive Secretary



UNITED NATIONS

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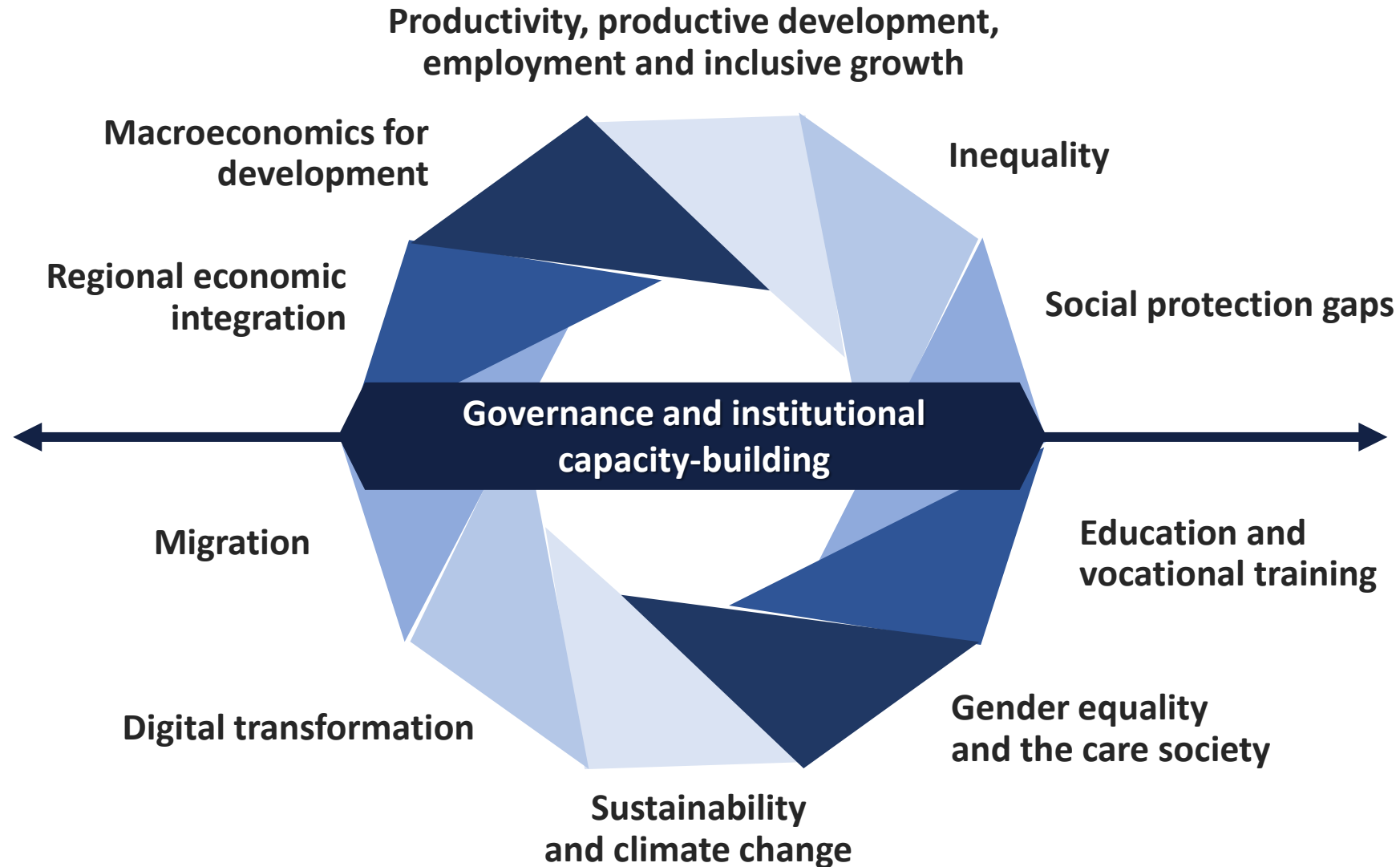
The global context

The backdrop to this meeting

- The world is facing a series of cascading crises, which are widening historical gaps. Over the past three years, the region's social indicators have shown setbacks, jeopardizing fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The region is facing a development crisis and yet another lost decade.
- The countries and the region as a whole are at a turning point. We must act with a sense of urgency, with more ambitious and wider-reaching policy action.
- Now is not a time for gradual or timid changes, but for bold and transformational policies capable of moving the needles of development.
- It is a time for transformative changes such as those proposed by the **care society**.

Ten priority areas for transforming the development model

As proposed at the thirty-ninth session of ECLAC, 24–26 October 2022



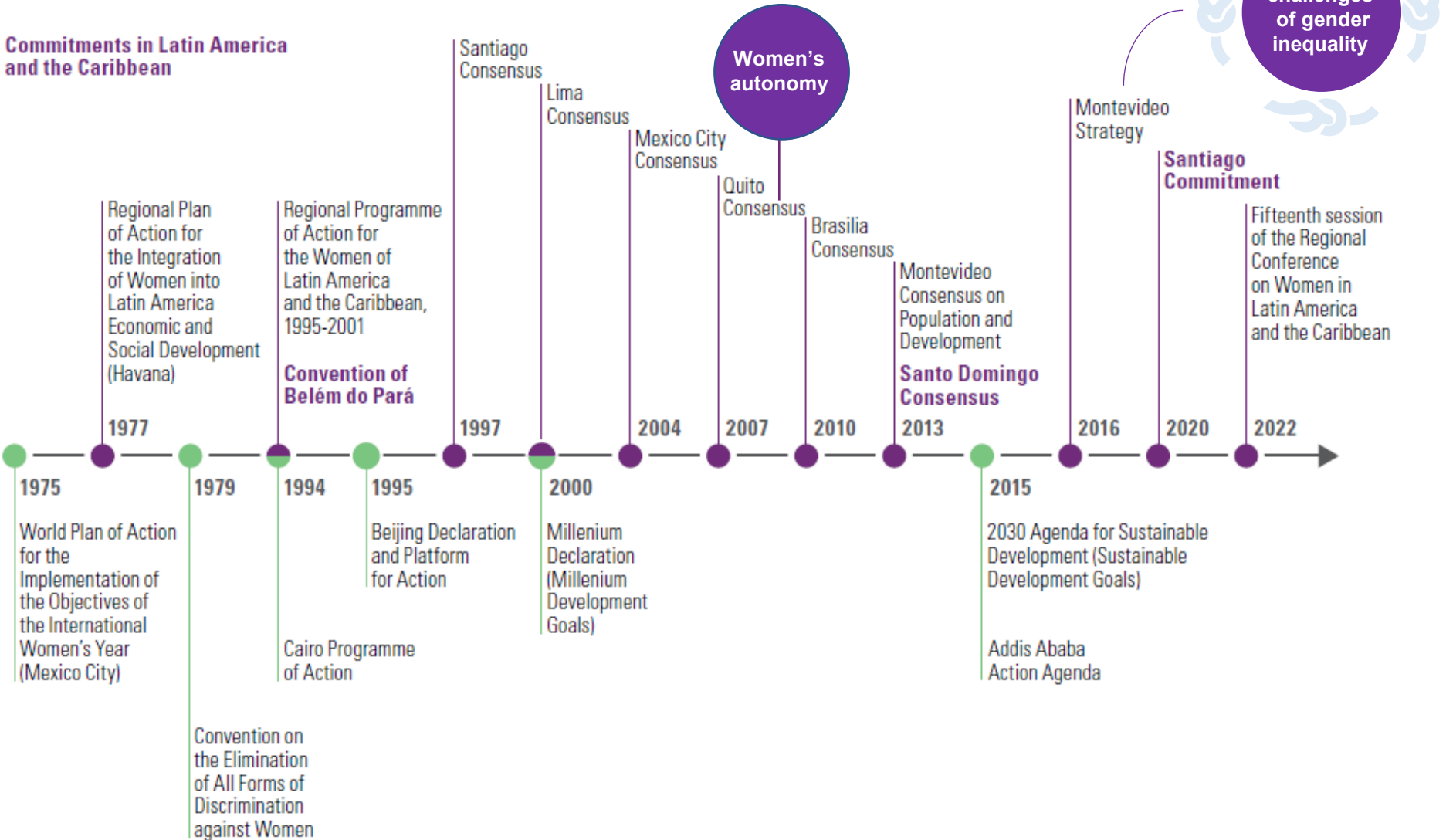
The care society

- The care society is a proposition that requires **collective, multiscale construction, with gender and social co-responsibility.**
- **The Regional Gender Agenda, the contributions of feminist economics, the proposals of women's and feminist movements and the paradigm of *buen vivir* (living well) guide the principles that underpin the construction of a society that places care and sustainability of life at the centre, with gender equality.**
- To avoid widening gender gaps and move towards substantive equality, **it is vital to build greater recognition of care for people and the planet.** In addition, care sectors have the potential to **boost economies and create jobs.**
- Given the demographic and epidemiological transition in the region, **demand for care is expected to grow considerably.**

Gender equality and the care society

The contributions of the Regional Gender Agenda and global commitments to achieve gender equality

Commitments in Latin America and the Caribbean



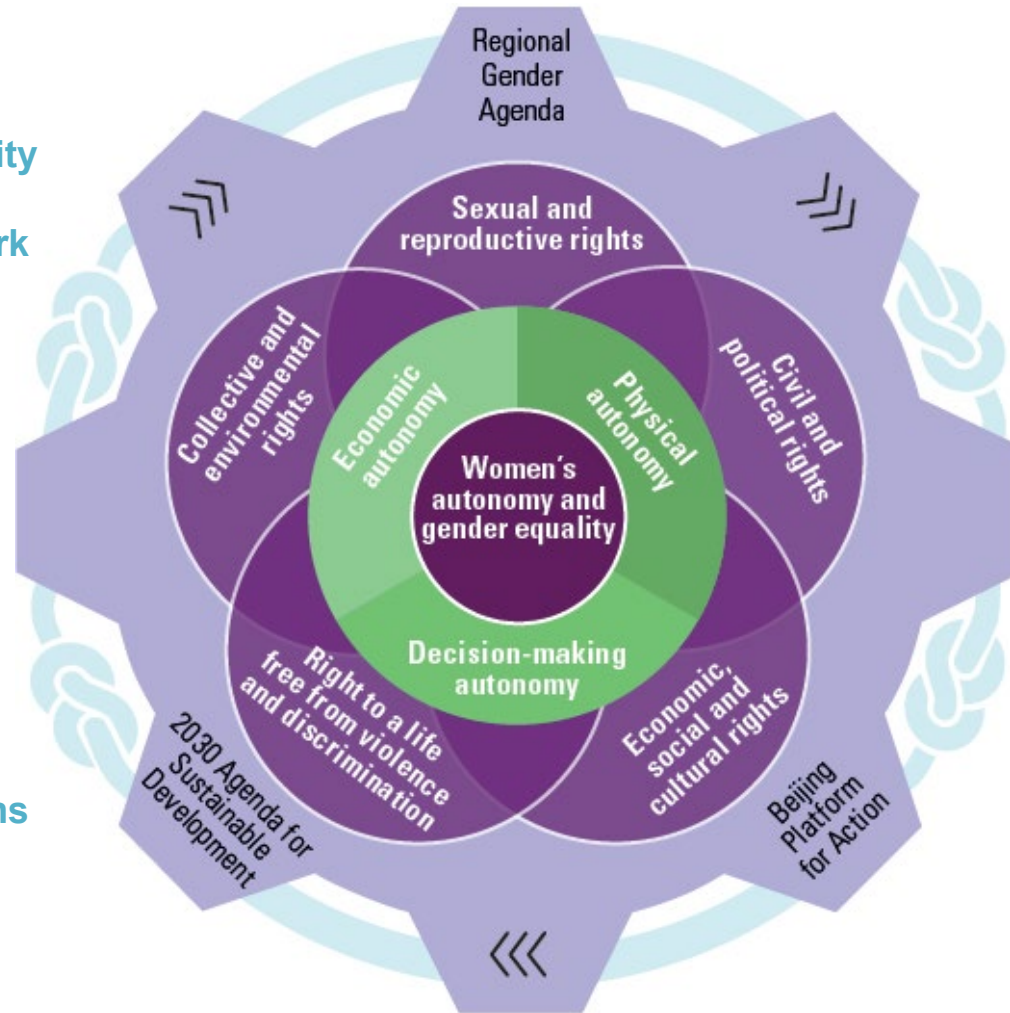
Global commitments

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

The Regional Gender Agenda has women's autonomy and gender equality at its heart, with a rights-based approach and links with global commitments

Socioeconomic inequality and the persistence of poverty, in the framework of exclusionary growth

Concentration of power and hierarchical relations in the public sphere



Discriminatory, violent and patriarchal cultural patterns

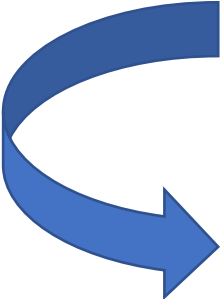

Rigid sexual division of labour and unfair social organization of care

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Towards a care society: the contributions of the Regional Gender Agenda to sustainable development* (LC/MDM.61/3), Santiago, 2021

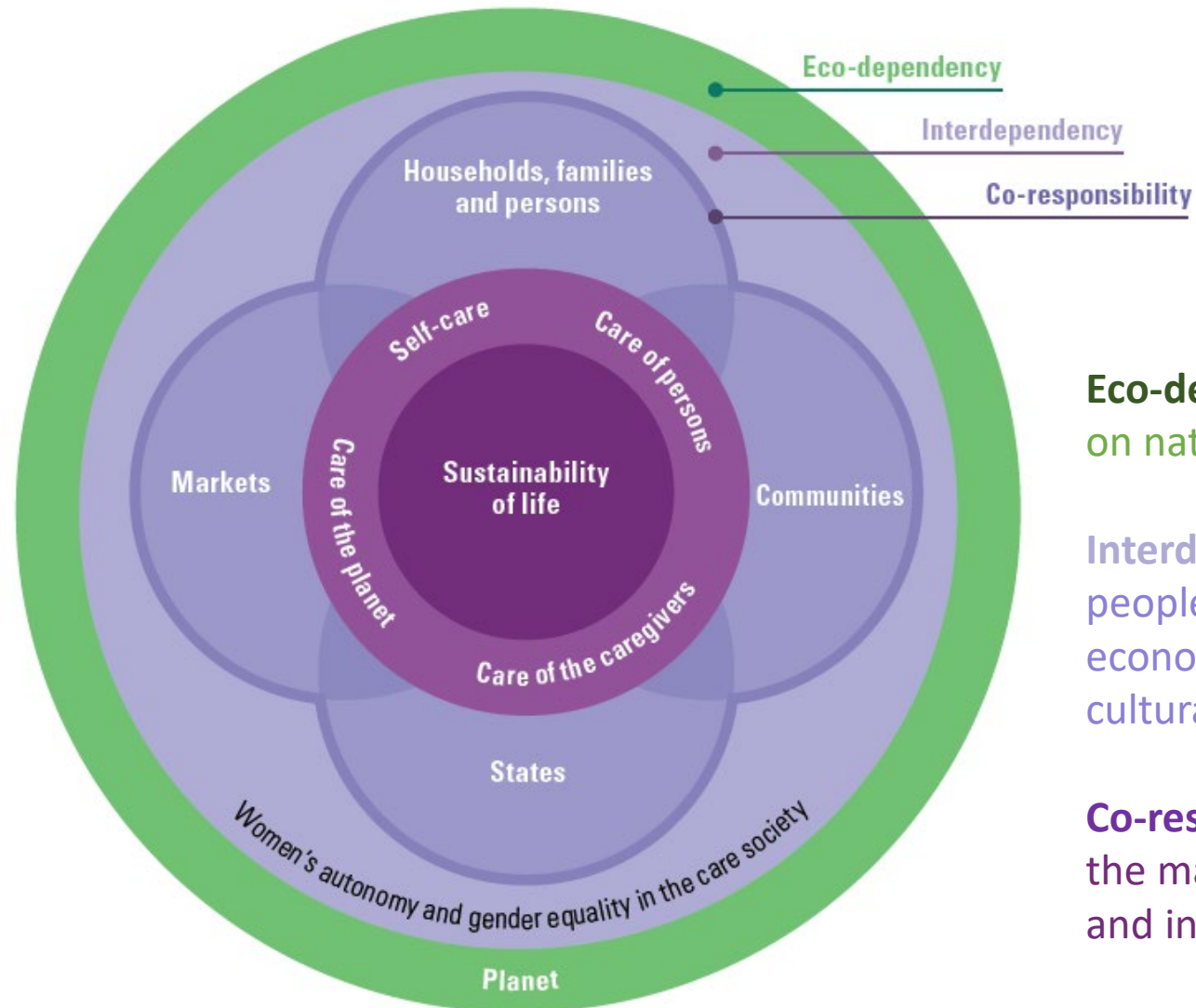
The right to care

- The right to care, understood as the right to provide care, the right to receive care, and the right to care for oneself, forms part of the human rights now recognized in international covenants and treaties, which every human being enjoys, irrespective of his or her vulnerability or dependency status.
- Based on the principles of equality, universality and social and gender co-responsibility, these rights make possible the sustainability of human life and stewardship of the planet.

The State as duty bearer

- 
- 
- Regulates the social organization of care within the framework of international rules on human rights
 - Organizes the ecosystem of services designed and offered by public and private institutions and implements the comprehensive care system
 - Recognizes care work and guarantees the rights of those who provide care
 - Establishes quality standards and different forms of financing
 - Pursues cultural and educational policies to promote social and gender co-responsibility

Components of progress towards the care society



Eco-dependency: human dependence on nature.

Interdependency: dependence among people and different areas, such as the economic, socio-environmental and cultural spheres.

Co-responsibility: among the State, the market, communities, families and individuals.

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

Macroeconomic and global challenges for a care society

Productive and trade diversification in sectors that offer more and better job opportunities for women

South America



1 in 10 women are employed in export-related occupations

Central America, Mexico and the Dominican Republic

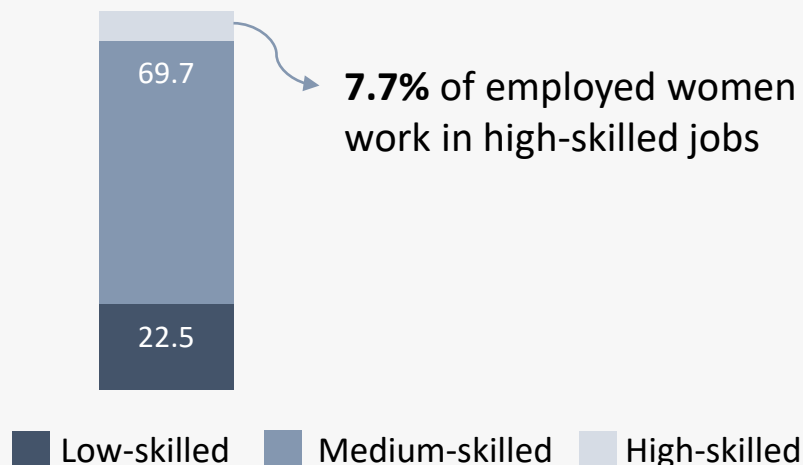


2 in 10 women are employed in export-related occupations

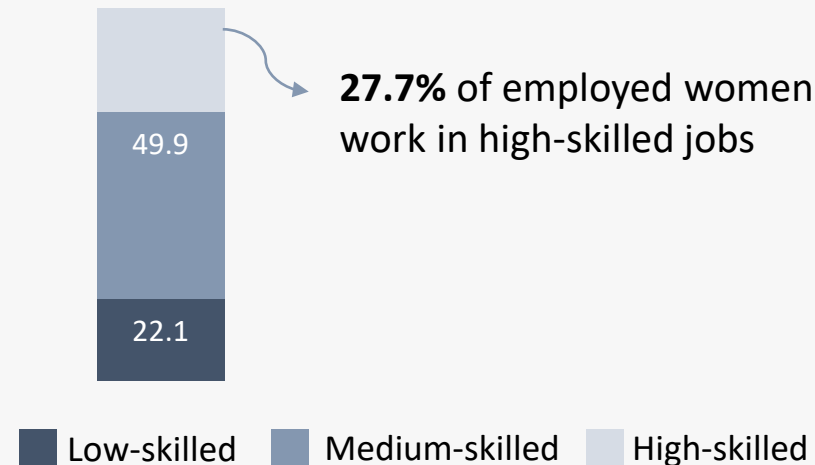
Latin America (13 countries, weighted average): qualification levels in high-export and low-export sectors, around 2020

(Percentages)

High-export sectors

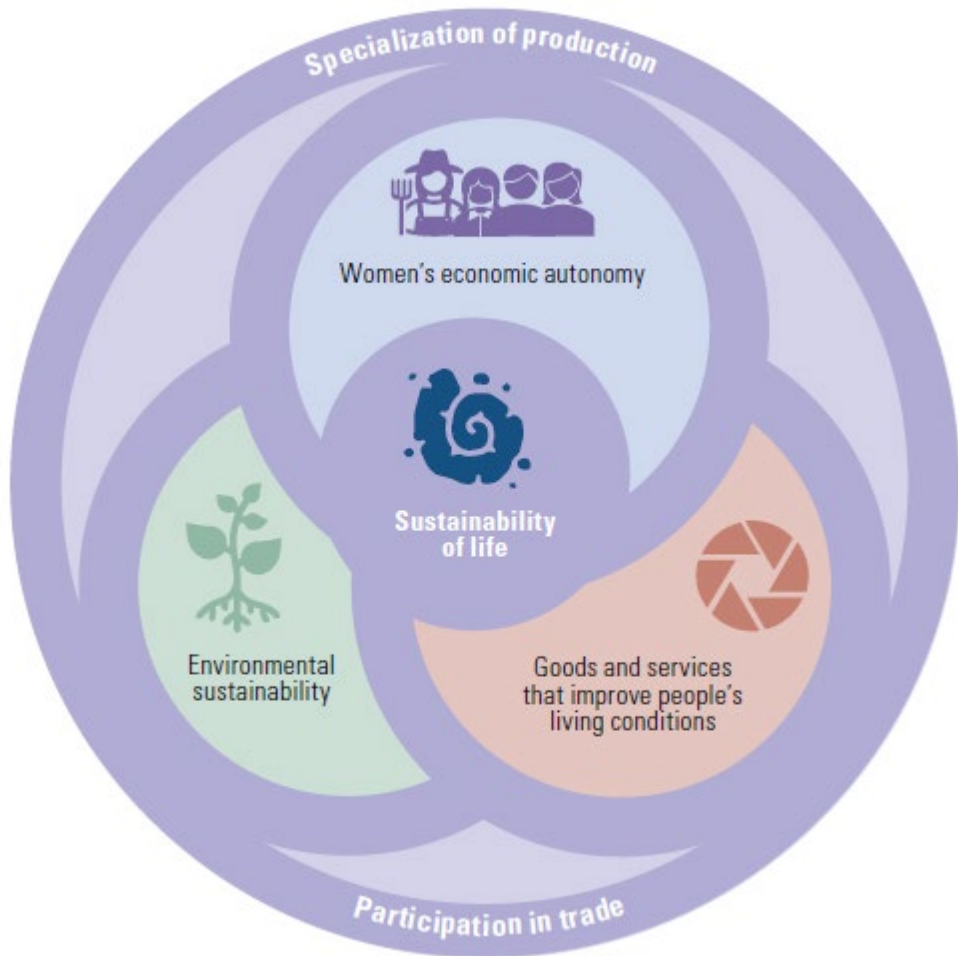


Low-export sectors



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG) and input-output tables for 2018.

The link between productive specialization, participation in trade, women's economic autonomy and the sustainability of life:

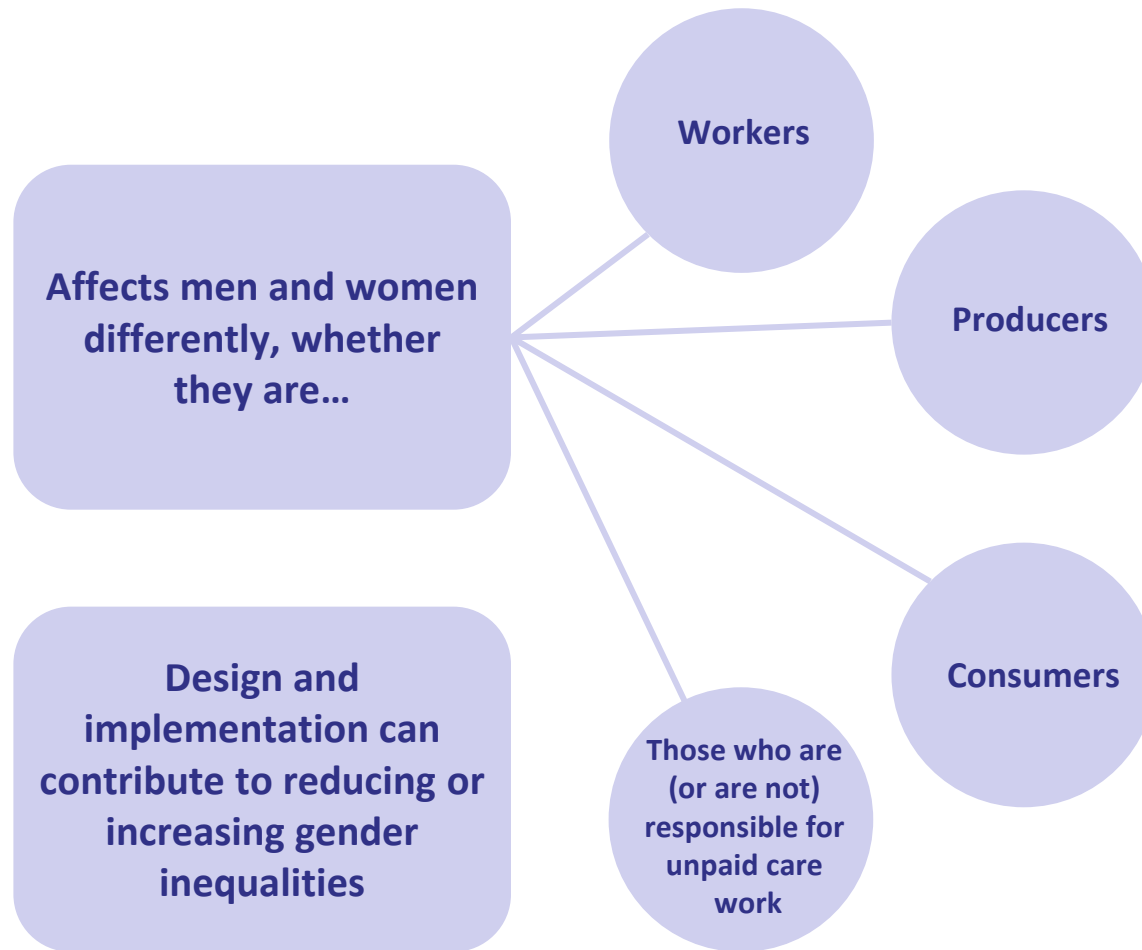


Export patterns in Latin America and the Caribbean, based on commodities or low value added manufactures, create relatively few jobs for women.

For international trade to contribute to women's economic autonomy and the sustainability of life, there is a need to:

- Diversify countries' productive and trade structures and strengthen the integration and complementarity of regional production.
- Boost sectors that contribute to improved living conditions, are knowledge-intensive, create more high-quality jobs for men and women, and take into account the time required for reproductive work.
- Reduce environmental footprints and promote sustainable patterns in production, consumption and distribution.

Gender-responsive fiscal policy

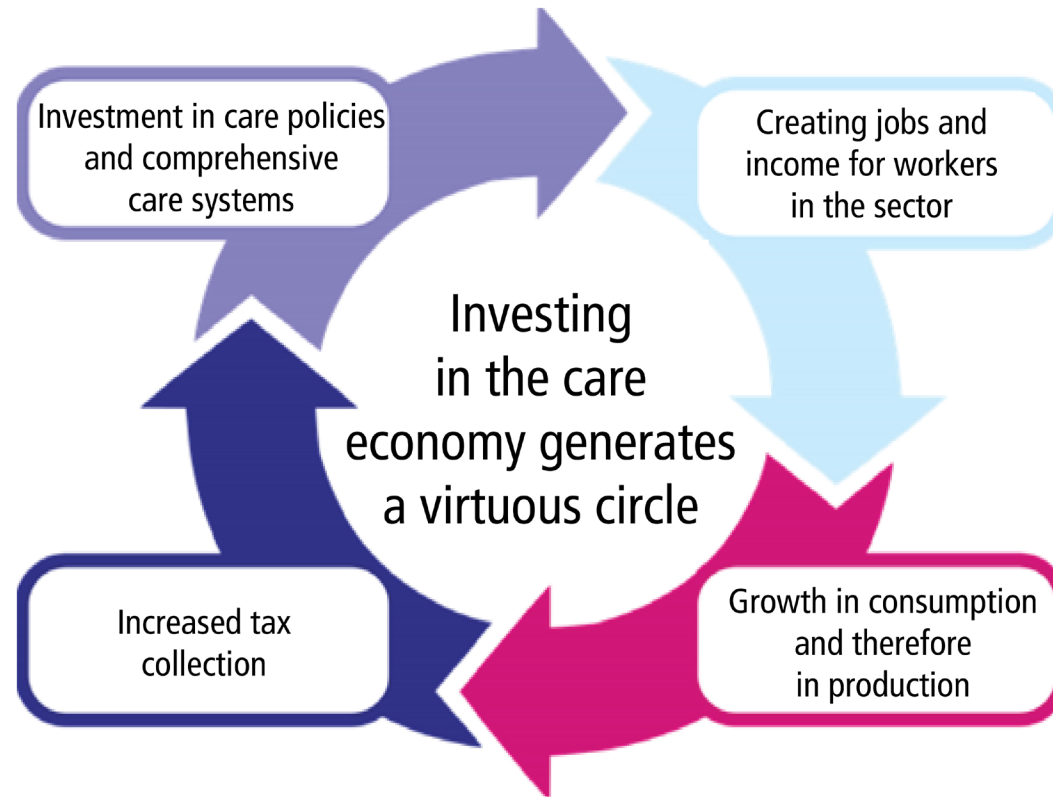


In Latin America and the Caribbean

- **Regressive bias** that disproportionately affects women with low incomes and women living in poverty.
- **Insufficient financing** for gender equality policy and women's rights.
- Tax systems with **limited revenues, high rates of evasion and avoidance** and numerous **tax exemptions**.
- **A need for more resources** to meet growing demand for care and address rising gender inequality.
- **In the short term**, limited fiscal spaces and social spending cuts or caps represent challenges in terms of progress towards a care society.-=

The virtuous circle of investing in the care economy

In Mexico, UN-Women and ECLAC estimate that a universal, free childcare system would require additional spending equivalent to 1.2% of GDP, and would boost overall employment by 3.9% and GDP by 1.7%, while increasing tax revenues by 0.3% of GDP.

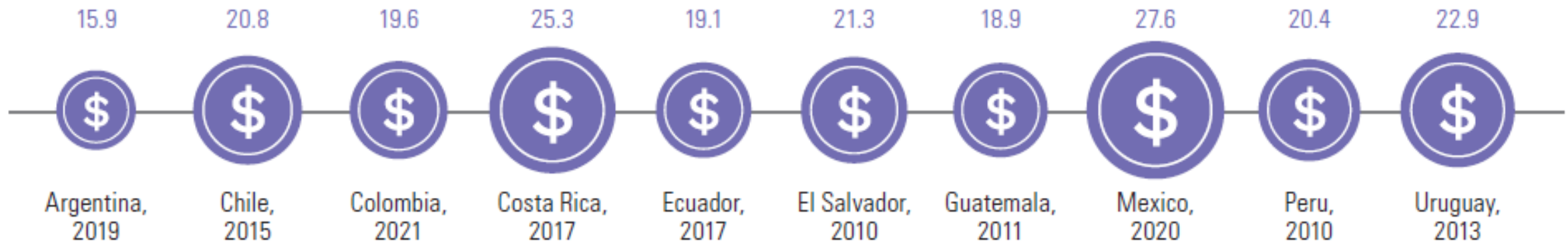


ECLAC estimates that closing the gender-related labour market participation gap could boost the region's GDP by 6.9% between 2016 and 2030.

Source: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), "Costs, returns, and effects of a universal, free, and quality child care system in Mexico", 2020 [online] <https://mexico.unwomen.org/es/digiteca/publicaciones/2020-nuevo/diciembre-2020/costos-retornos-y-efectos-de-un-sistema-de-cuidado-infantil-universal-en-mexico>.

Putting a cash value on unpaid work in the region shows that it plays a critical role in the economy

Latin America (10 countries): value of unpaid work performed in households, 2010–2021
(Percentages of GDP)



74% of unpaid work is performed by women

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of valuation of unpaid work calculated by the lead agencies for the preparation of annual accounts, and unofficial calculations for Argentina and Uruguay.

SUMMARY: How policies on productive development and international integration together with fiscal policies contribute to achieving gender equality and a care society

- Analysis:

- The region's production and export matrix is in general poorly diversified and technologically unsophisticated, with low value added activities that generate relatively few quality jobs for women.
- The fiscal structure is fragile, with regressive biases that affect women, and revenues that are insufficient to finance the investments required for a care society, in particular in light of the expected surge in the demand for care and the need to invest in gender equality.

- Recommendation: drive **changes in the orientation of fiscal, productive and trade policies, from a gender perspective:**

- Diversify productive and trade structures.
- Strengthen regional integration and complementary production.
- Boost knowledge-intensive, low-carbon sectors.
- Promote a fiscal compact that promotes gender equality.
 - Progressively increase revenues.
 - Reduce tax evasion and avoidance.
 - Allocate sufficient resources to policies for gender equality and universal social protection systems and invest strategically in care systems and policies.

The inherent link between
the sexual division of labour
and gender inequality

Cascading crises have deepened gender inequalities in the region

- Increased poverty and overrepresentation of women in poor households
- Mass exodus of women from the labour force
- Higher women's unemployment

Socioeconomic inequality and persistent poverty

Sexual division of labour

- Overrepresentation of women on the front lines of the pandemic response (health and education)
- Increased demand for home care, performed primarily by women

- Women on the front lines but less involved in decision-making in pandemic responses

Concentration of power

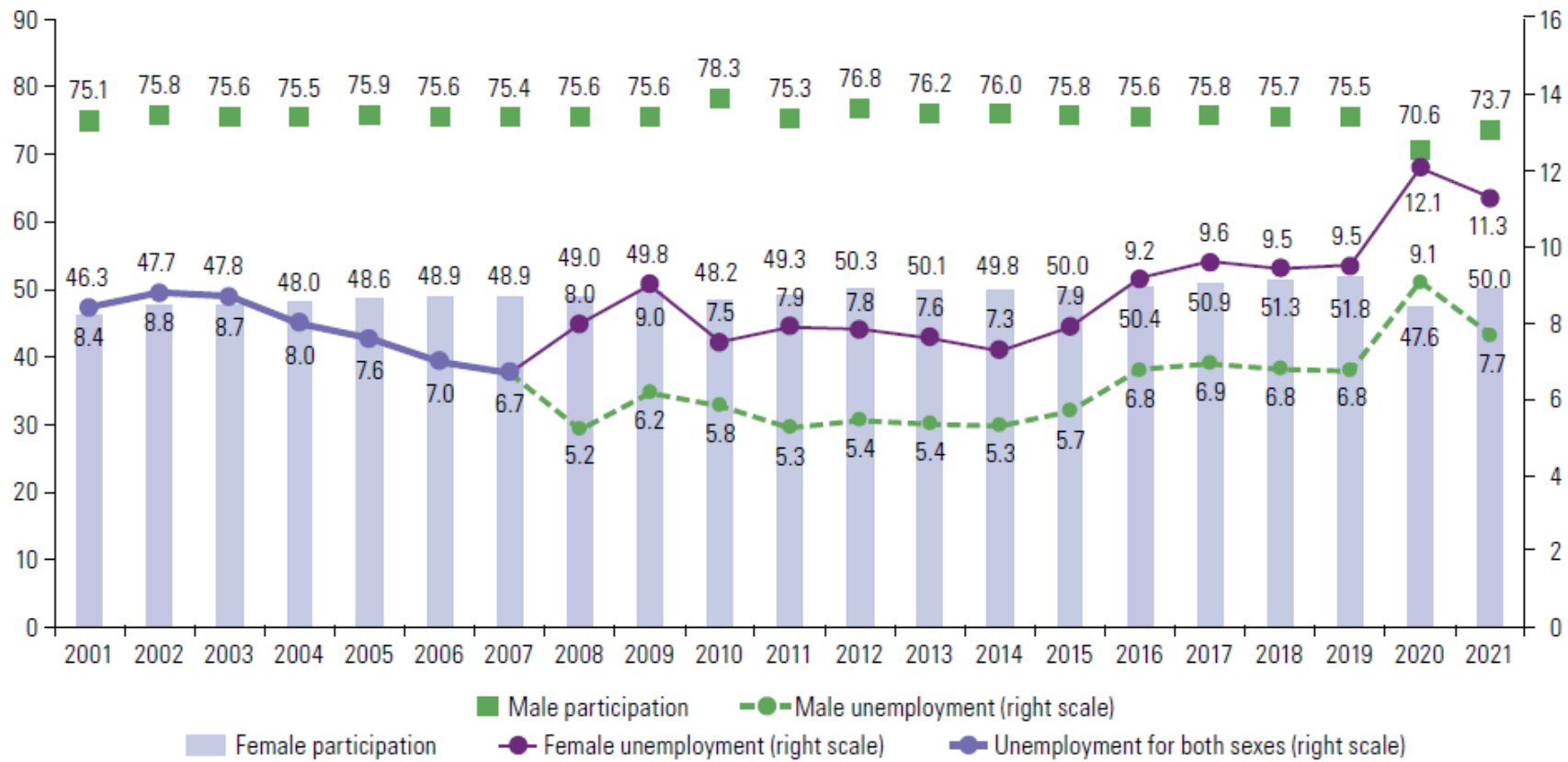
Patriarchal cultural patterns

- Closure of services to address violence against women and girls
- Shortage of sexual and reproductive health services

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

Wide labour participation gaps between men and women due to women's excessive domestic and care workloads

Latin America and the Caribbean (24 countries, weighted averages): trends in labour force participation rates and unemployment rates, by sex, 2001–2021
(Percentages)



The pandemic triggered a setback of nearly 20 years in women's labour force participation rate.

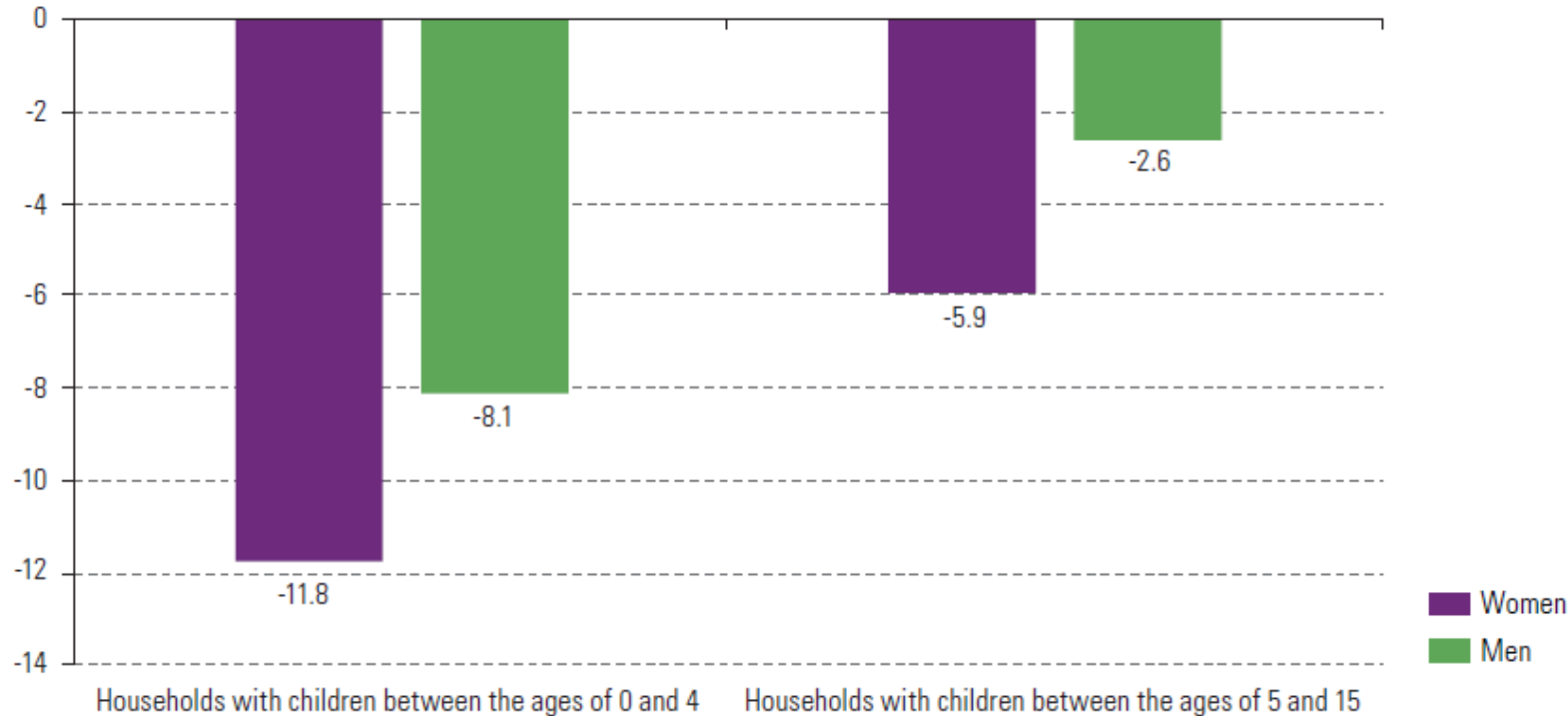
The historical gap in unemployment and labour force participation between men and women has not been closed.

Women are overburdened with domestic work and unpaid care work, the main obstacle to their full integration into the labour market.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Women in households with young children were hardest hit by increased demand for care amid the pandemic

Latin America (13 countries, weighted average): variation in the number of employed persons aged 20–59, by sex and by the presence of children aged 0–15 in the household, 2019–2020
(Percentages)

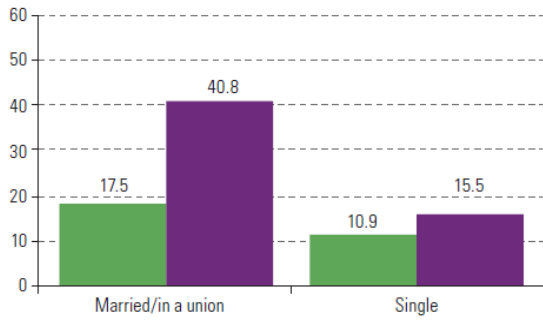


- Women have a structurally lower employment rate.
- Lack of co-responsibility in households pushes women out of the labour market, limiting their economic autonomy.

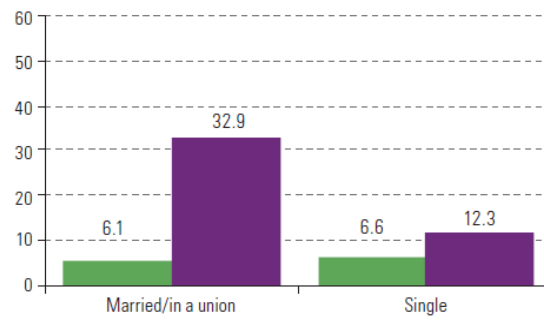
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Latin America (6 countries): time spent by persons aged 18 or under performing unpaid work, by sex and civil status
(Hours per week)

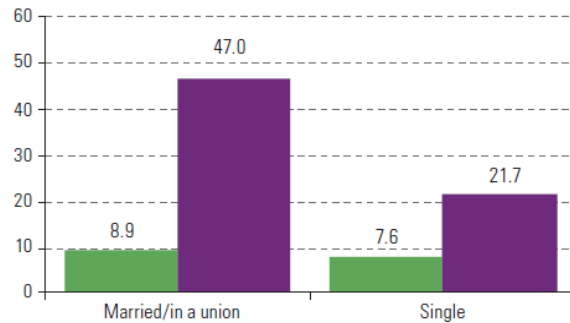
A. Colombia, 2017



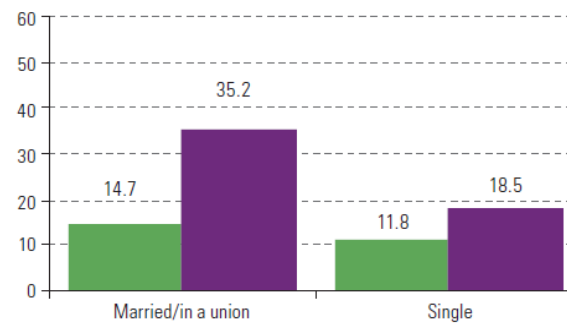
B. Ecuador, 2012



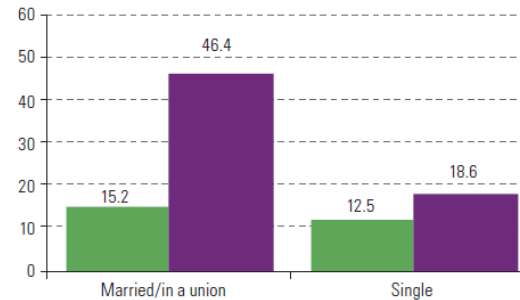
C. Guatemala, 2017



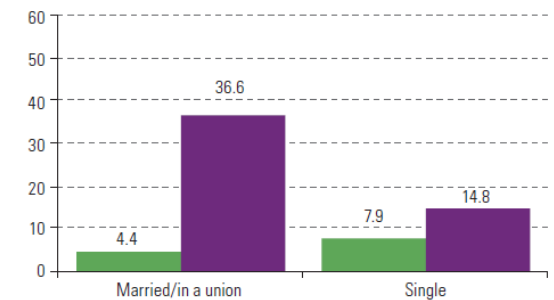
D. Honduras, 2009



E. Mexico, 2019



F. Dominican Republic, 2016



The sexual division of labour is established at an early age and is reinforced by harmful practices such as child marriage.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 1 in 5 girls are in a union or married before the age of 18. Care work negatively affects the development of girls and adolescent girls.

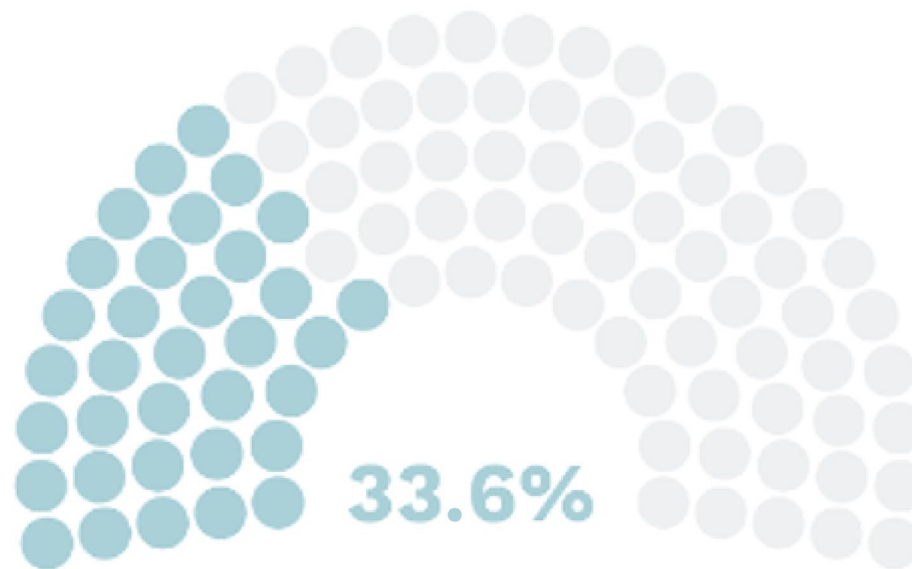
Early union or child marriage (before the age of 18) is a harmful practice and a persistent violation of rights.

Ensuring access to comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services is crucial for reversing gender inequality.

Countries such as Costa Rica reported significant reductions in adolescent pregnancy after adopting sexuality education programmes.

Women's time constraints prevent higher levels of political participation

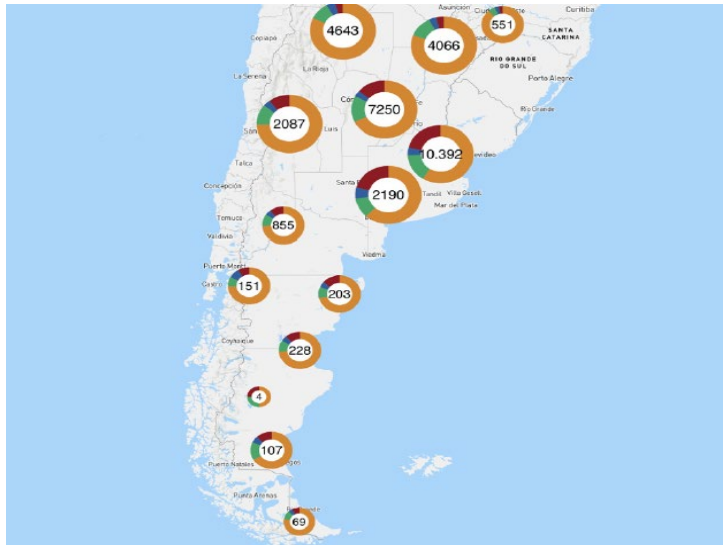
- In 2021, women held 33.6% of seats in national parliaments
- In local governments, only 24.9% of elected officials are women
- Latin America and the Caribbean is still far from achieving gender parity in decision-making



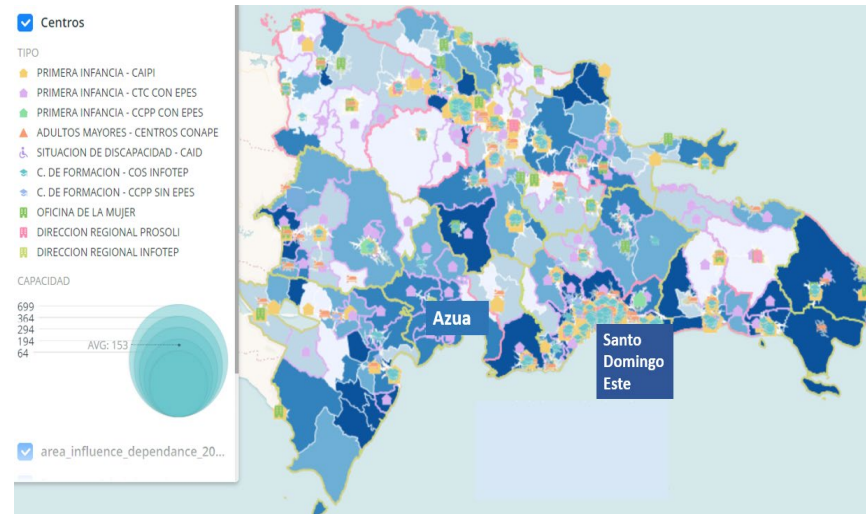
It is estimated that, at the present pace of progress, it will take over 40 years to reach parity in national parliaments

The region is advancing in the use of georeferencing to design care policies that are effective at the local level

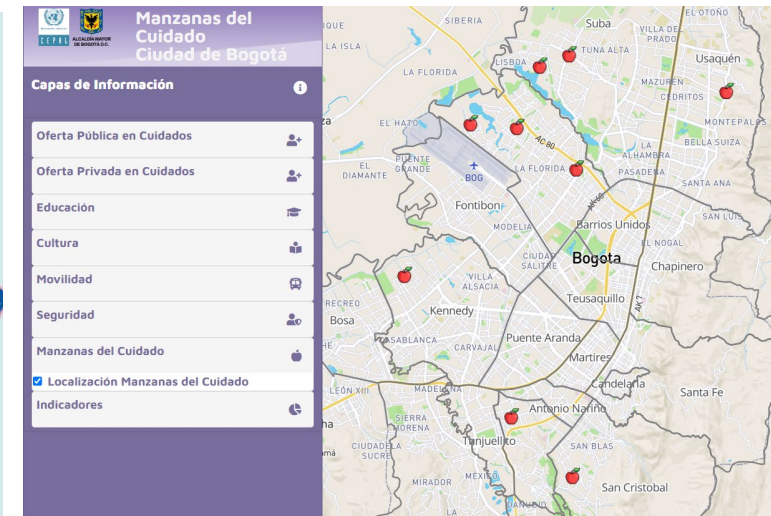
Argentina:
the federal care service map



Dominican Republic:
care communities



Bogotá:
care service districts



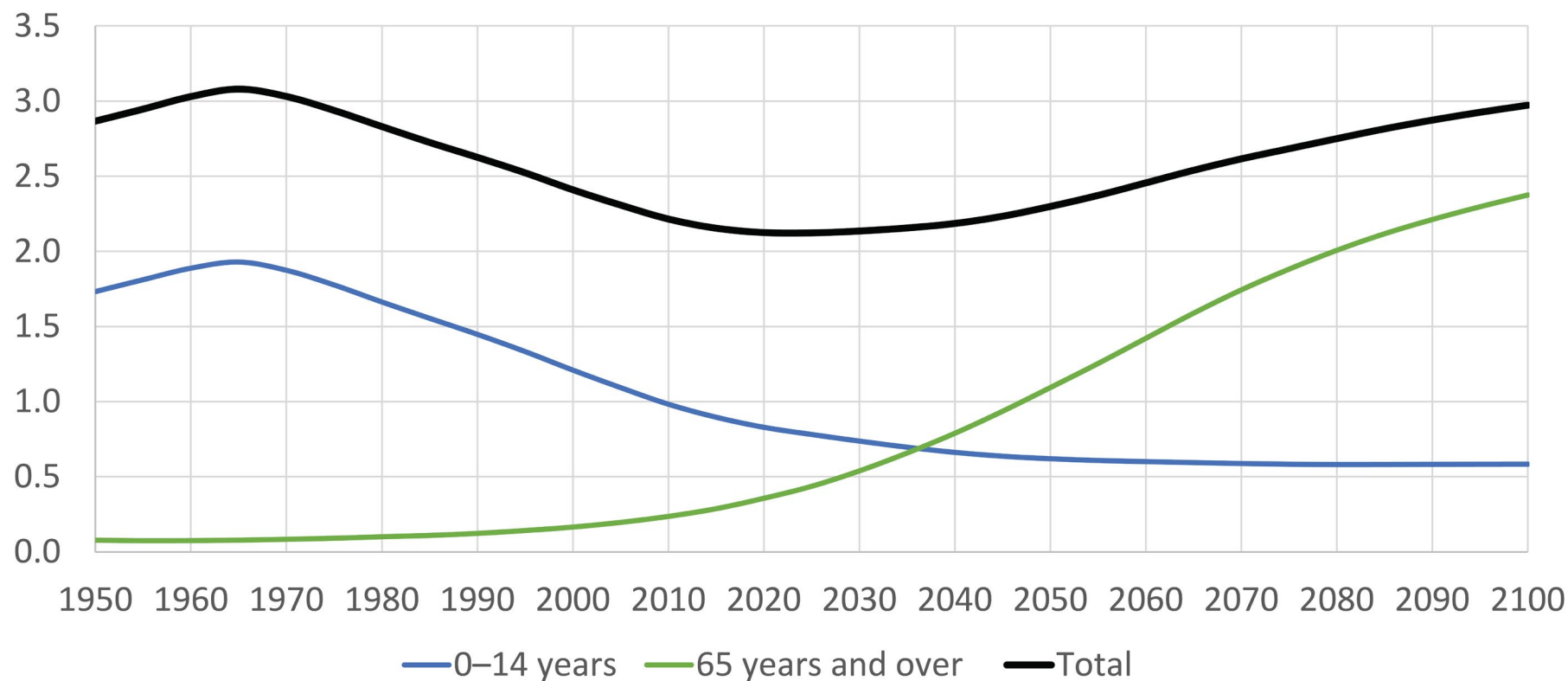
The care society must address the territorial dimension:

- Care must be analysed based on location, considering the different needs of people living in cities and rural areas.
- Infrastructure and sanitation conditions, access to transportation and connectivity are crucial factors that determine how much time is spent on care work.

Care amid demographic,
epidemiological and
economic changes

Demographic and epidemiological transitions are boosting the demand for care for older persons

Latin America and the Caribbean (38 countries): ratio of care units to population aged 15–64 years



Even before the care of children has been resolved, we are facing a huge care burden with the growing proportion of older adults

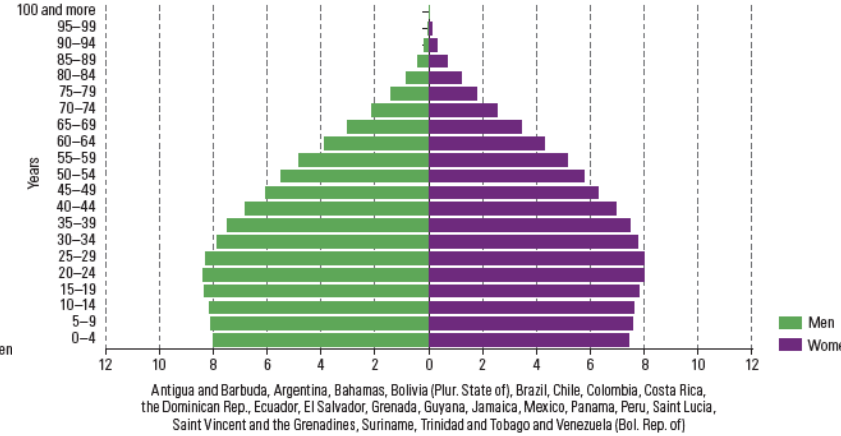
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), CEPALSTAT [accessed on 31 May 2022]; for calculation of care units: M. Durán, "El desafío de la dependencia en una proyección de futuro", *Documentación Laboral*, No. 102, 2014, and population estimates from United Nations, World Population Prospects 2019 [online database] <https://population.un.org/wpp/>.

The different phases of the demographic transition affect the timing of the turning point in demand for care

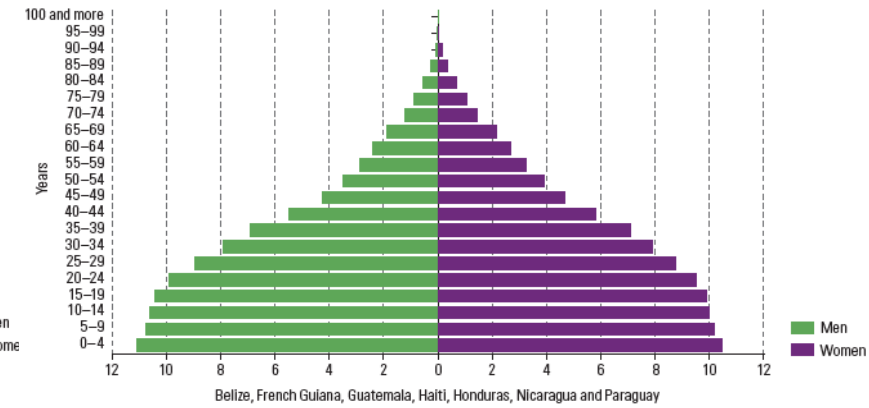
Advanced ageing



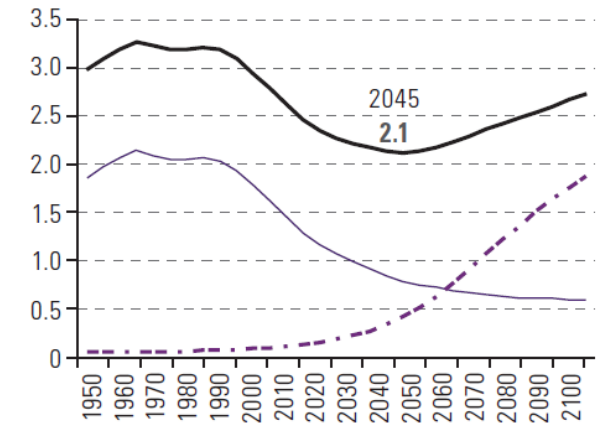
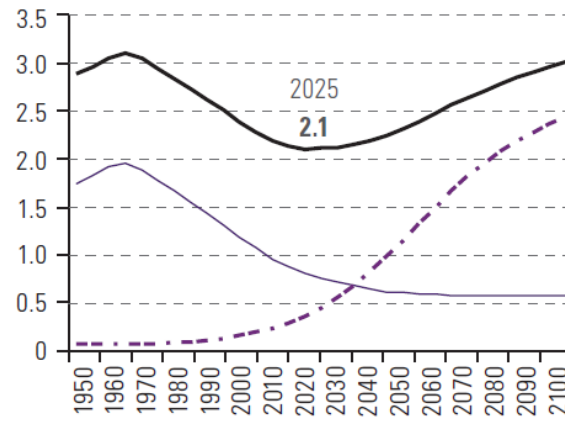
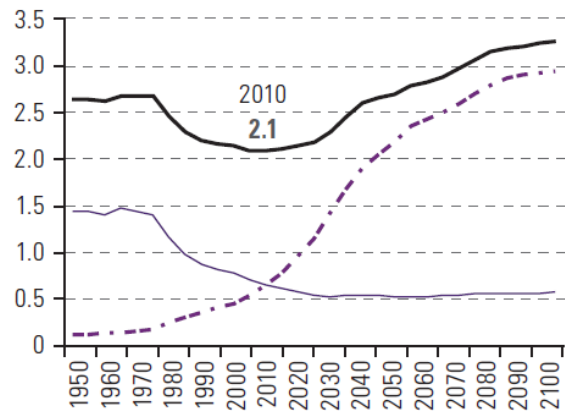
Moderate ageing



Mild ageing



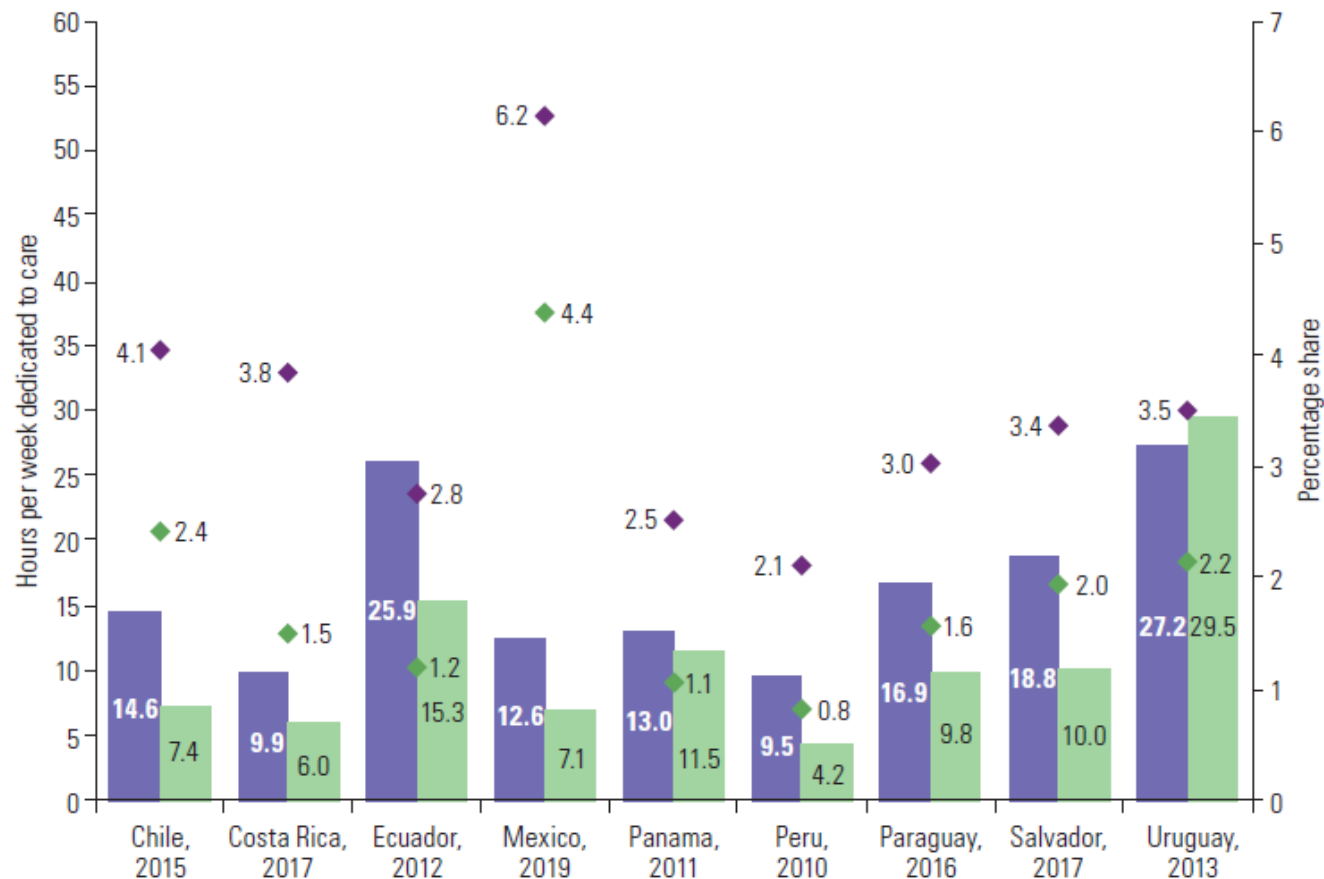
Ratio of care units to population aged 15–64 years



— Total — 0–14 years - - - 65 years and over

The region lags far behind in health and in-home care systems

Latin America (9 countries): time spent caring for household members who are dependent owing to disability or chronic illness, and participation rate of the population aged 15 years or older, by gender
(Hours per week and percentages)



- **There is growing demand for care for persons who are dependent owing to disability or chronic illness**

■ Time devoted by women to caring for household members subject to dependency owing to disability or chronic illness

■ Time devoted by men to caring for household members subject to dependency owing to disability or chronic illness

◆ Share of women in caring for household members subject to dependency owing to disability or chronic illness (right scale)

◆ Share of men in caring for household members subject to dependency owing to disability or chronic illness (right scale)

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special tabulations of the time-use surveys of the respective countries.

| The labour market and care work

Sharp asymmetry in the total workload of men and women: women work more hours, but fewer of these hours are paid

In all countries and age groups, among the employed population, **women have a heavier total workload** than men, with differences ranging from **2.4 to 20.8** hours per week.



Women spend **6.3 to 29.5 hours** more on domestic and care work per week than men

In the region, women spend 19.6% of their time on unpaid domestic and care work, compared to just 7.3% for men.

Women spend almost triple the time that men do on these activities

A major effort is required in labour markets to advance towards gender equality

- **Long working days are incompatible with care tasks**

16 countries have legislation conforming to or improving on the ILO recommended weekly limit of 44 hours of paid work.

- **Regulations relating to maternity leave are insufficient and coverage is limited given high levels of informality**

Only the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Colombia and Paraguay mandate maternity leave of 18 weeks or more, as recommended by ILO.

- **Paternity leave is short and limits men's involvement in care of newborns**

Only four countries mandate leave between 13 and 15 days (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia, Paraguay and Uruguay).

- **Parental leave granted following maternity or paternity leave for biological or adoptive parents must not be limited to mothers only**

Few countries in the region have implemented this type of leave (Chile, Colombia, Cuba and Uruguay).

- **The increase in employment in emerging sectors linked to digitalization presents challenges and opportunities amid the growing demand for care and the persistent digital gender gap**

4 in 10 women in the region have no Internet connection or cannot afford Internet access.

One in three employed women work in the care economy

Health

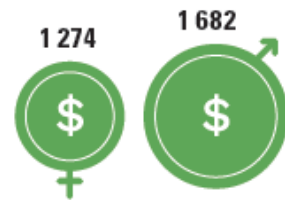
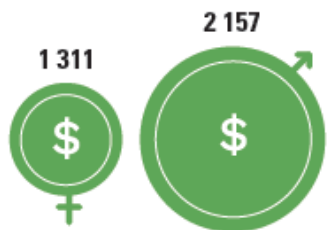
Education

Paid domestic work

Share of women workers by sector relative to total female employment
(Percentages)



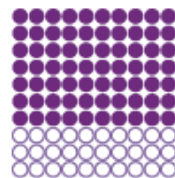
Average monthly wage
(Dollars at purchasing power parity)



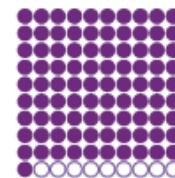
Women workers in the sector
(Percentages)



72.6



69.6



90.7

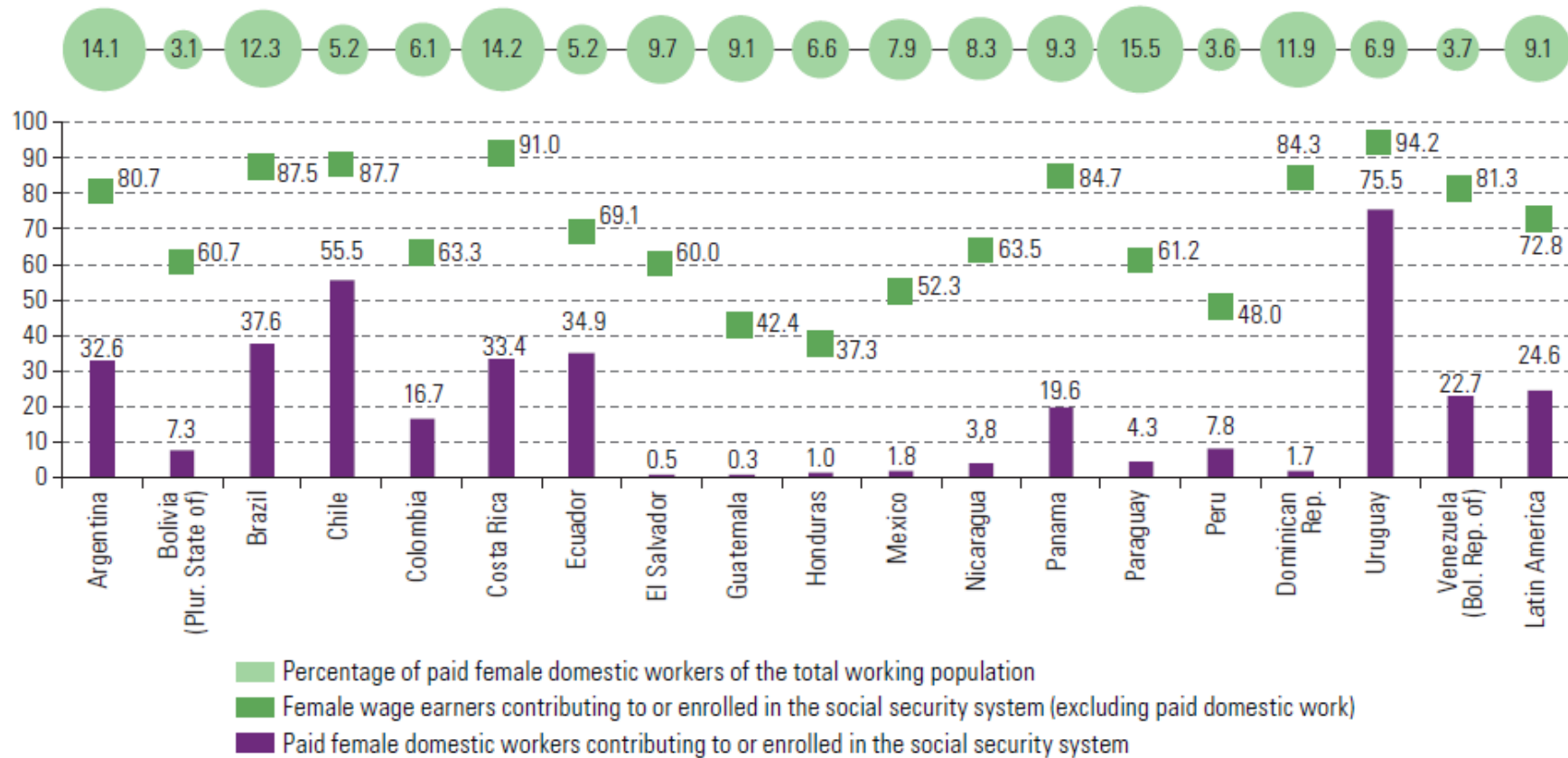
Persons employed in occupations related to care:

- Are mainly women.
- Carry out tasks requiring knowledge and skills with little social recognition, despite the fact that they are essential to the sustainability of life and well-being.
- Are at the forefront of the recovery: education, health, care in households. The wage gap remains.

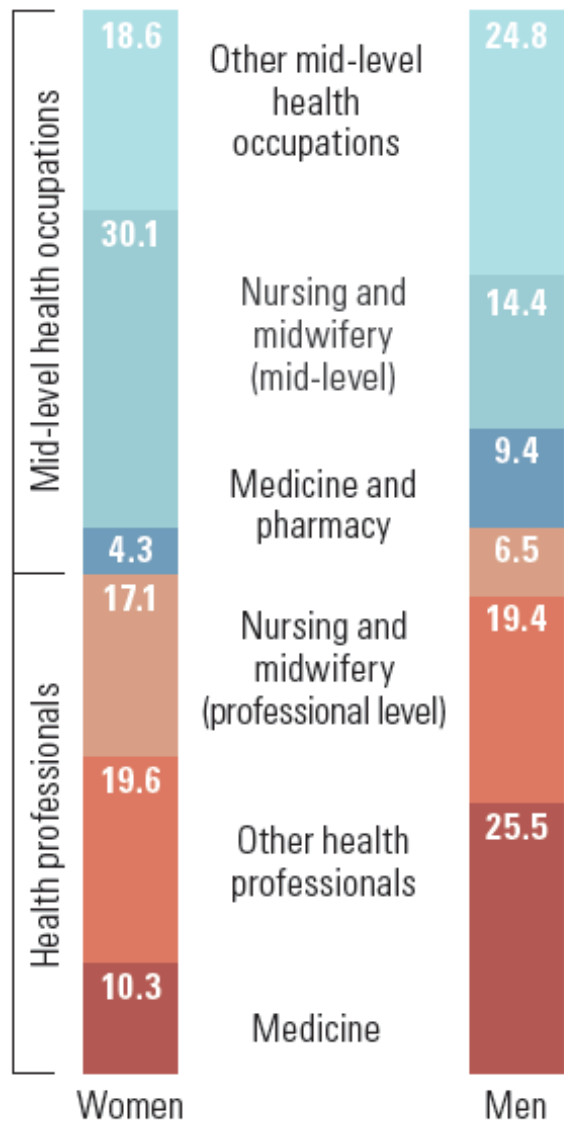
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Paid domestic work is a source of employment for 11 million to 18 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean; 93% of them are women

Latin America and the Caribbean (18 countries, weighted average): paid female domestic workers as a share of all employed women and workers contributing to or enrolled in the social security system, around 2020^a
(Percentages)



Distribution of persons employed in health subsectors, by sex
(Percentages)



72.6% of health sector employees are women

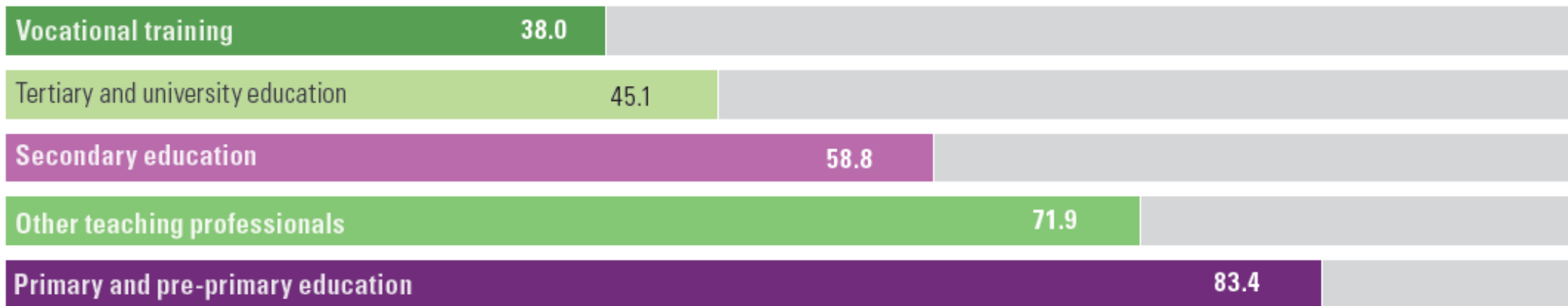
- The **wage gap between men and women employed in the health sector stands at 39.2%**, the highest among the paid sectors of the care economy.
- **25.5% of men employed in the health sector are medical professionals, compared to only 10.3% of women in this category.**

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Of the women employed in the education sector, 62% work at the preschool and primary levels, which typically have the lowest wages

- In all the countries, **at least half of jobs are in the public sector.**
- The sexual division of labour is reproduced in the education sector: those working directly with children in early childhood are mainly women.
- There is a concentration of men in **higher education**, the subsector with the highest wages.

Women employed in education, by subsector
(Percentages)



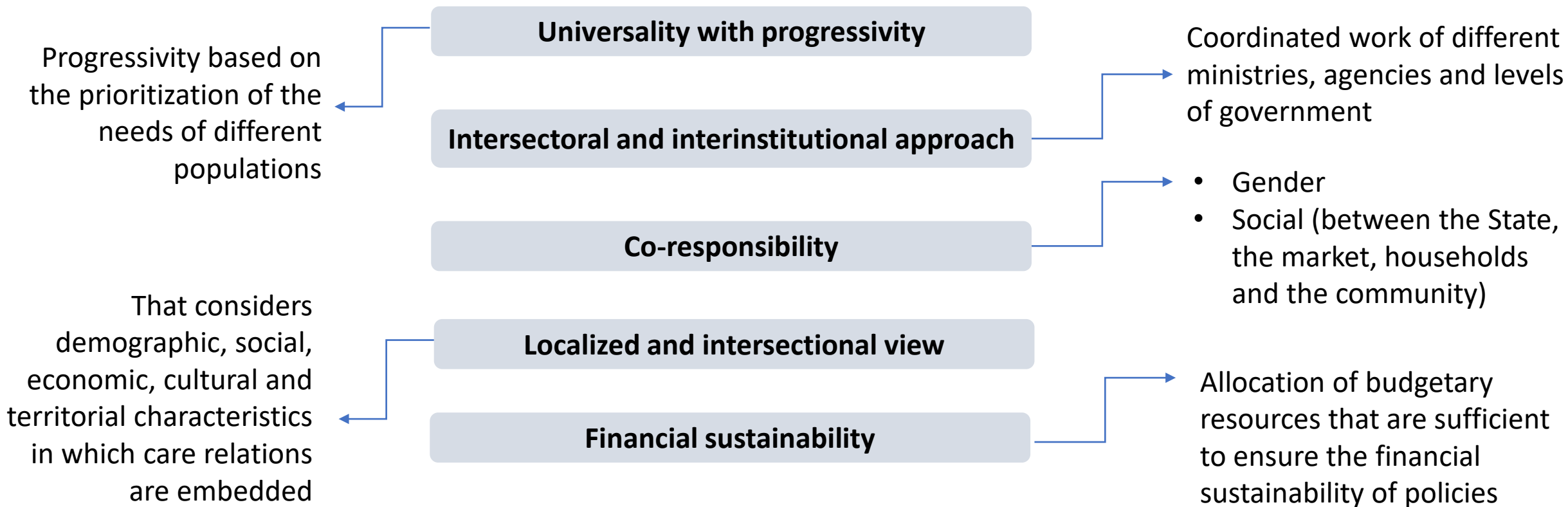
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

A change of era: the State for the care society

It is well established that the absence or weakness of care policies and systems affects women's autonomy in Latin America and the Caribbean and reinforces the structural challenges of inequality

This is not a time for gradual or timid changes, but for bold and transformational policies

Guiding principles for the design of care policies



Public policies for the care society

1. Comprehensive care policies and systems
2. Fiscal compacts with a gender perspective
3. Labour market policies
4. Inclusive digitalization and closing of the digital gender gap
5. Care of the planet

Designing and implementing care policies requires affirmative action in the areas of taxation, employment and industrial, economic and social policies in the short, medium and long terms

This implies:

- Guaranteeing the rights of persons who need care and of persons who provide care.
- Shedding light on the multiplier effects of the care economy.
- Implementing policies that give consideration to time, resources, benefits and quality services.
- Eliminate precarious work conditions in the care sector.
- Generate information and advance in the georeferencing of data on time use, women's labour participation and gender gaps.

It is time for urgent action and a higher level of ambition:
gender gaps must be closed now



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