



**Mechanisms for
the advancement
of women in Latin America
and the Caribbean:**

**a necessary condition for the
advancement of gender equality**

MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY

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Foreword

2025 marks the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which took place in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in China. Almost 30 years have passed, and the path to follow to fulfill the historic commitment made by States to women and girls from all around the world is still arduous. We need to do more, do it better and do it faster. Girls born in 1995, who are adult women today, continue to face different forms of violence, have fewer opportunities to participate in public life and may receive lower salaries than men for work of equal value.

Gender inequality continues to be deeply embedded in our social, political and cultural practices. We saw it during the COVID-19 pandemic and we can also see it with the advancement of anti-progressive groups. Gender inequality manifests itself in four structural challenges that are clearly outlined in the Montevideo Strategy¹: socioeconomic inequality and poverty in contexts of excluding growth; discriminatory, violent and patriarchal cultural patterns; the sexual division of labour and unfair social organization of care; and the concentration of power and hierarchical relations in the public sphere.

Making substantive, transformative and sustainable achievements in the area of gender equality depends on multiple factors, and consolidating those achievements over time in the form of irreversible changes is the ultimate aspiration of any social change. In this regard, in the majority of countries Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women (MAWs) play an essential role as leading entities to coordinate and facilitate the process of mainstreaming gender equality in public policies, so that the institutional framework can be strengthened and ensures all public policies take into account the needs, demands and proposals of women and girls.

This document presents the state-of-the-art of the different Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women (MAWs) in Latin America and the Caribbean, from their creation to the present day, and provides an overview of the normative framework – from the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its General Recommendations to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the different agreements of the Regional Gender Agenda adopted at the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America in the Caribbean– that highlights the importance of having Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women as a necessary condition for the advancement of gender equality. As UN Women’s Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean, it is highly rewarding to see that, in recent years, several States in the region have strengthened their Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women, a clear signal of the States’ commitment to half of their population, women and girls, and the creation of fairer and more equitable societies.

The document also presents a series of key aspects and recommendations to strengthen these Mechanisms, mainly with respect to their level within the hierarchy of governments, mandates and specific functions, the existence of a national strategy or plan that takes into account the main needs, demands and proposals to achieve gender equality, or the existence of other state and government entities that promote gender equality. However, none of this would make sense if the Mechanism lacks political support at the highest level, an adequate budget and the resources necessary to fulfill its mandate in an optimal manner.

In 2015 Heads of State and Government adopted, in the context of the United Nations General Assembly, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, a plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity. The full implementation of this Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals will not be possible if we fail to achieve gender equality, which will take nearly 300 years if the current rate of progress continues². Women and girls cannot wait. We need decisive, bold and brave actions to move forward in this regard, and strengthening Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women fulfills these requirements. We hope the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action that States will conduct on the occasion of its 30th anniversary are useful in this regard.

At UN Women we are willing to continue to work, in coordination with national authorities and feminist and women's organizations, to strengthen Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women. We need transformative policies that place women at the center to leverage their power and energy and achieve a real impact that improves the life of women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Have a fruitful reading.

María-Noel Vaeza

**UN Women's Regional Director
for the Americas and the Caribbean**

1. Gender inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean

Gender inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean is a historic structural trait of the region associated with decades of wealth concentration, environmental deterioration and precarization of the living conditions of women and girls, especially those who face multiple and interrelated forms of discrimination, as well as those living in contexts of poverty, girls, adolescents, young and older women, indigenous women, rural women of African descent, women with disabilities, migrants, refugees and LGBTI+ persons, among others.

The Montevideo Strategy for the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 was adopted by ECLAC's Member States at the XIII Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. To advance towards substantive equality and achieve sustainable development by 2030, governments agreed it would be necessary to overcome four structural challenges:

- socioeconomic inequality and poverty in contexts of excluding growth, which are reflected, for example, in the persistence of gender wage gaps, lack of access to the job market, increased presence of women in the informal economy, lower access to social protection and higher poverty indicators among women;
- patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns that perpetuate traditional gender roles and normalize violence against women and girls;
- the sexual division of labour and the unfair social organization of care, which assigns paid and unpaid domestic labour to women, combined with the lack of policies and care services to ensure shared gender responsibility between the State, the market, families, communities and individuals; and
- the concentration of power and hierarchical relations in the public sphere. Women continue to be subrepresented in negotiation and decision-making spaces, both in the legislative, executive and judicial branches and different levels of government, particularly in the local sphere, the private sector and academia, among others.

These challenges, which mainly affect women facing multiple and interrelated forms of discrimination, are mutually reinforcing and result in complex socioeconomic and cultural systems, as well as systems of beliefs that hinder and limit the reach of policies on gender equality and the autonomy of women.³

Despite the significant progress made in recent decades in areas such as girls' access to education or the reduction of maternal mortality, the COVID-19 pandemic and the multiple and interrelated crises that have occurred in the region has exacerbated the structural challenges of gender inequality and existing gaps between men and women in different areas, with a more persistent effect on the most vulnerable women and girls.

Hard-fought gains in the areas of gender equality and guaranteeing the rights of women and girls in all their diversity are at risk of being eroded. The deterioration of the economic, social and environmental situation as a result of multiple and interrelated international crises in the energy, food and financial sectors, the growing challenges brought by climate change, the loss of biodiversity, desertification and increased levels of public debt in numerous countries in the region are jeopardizing the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

In this context, Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women (MAWs) are key stakeholders of the States' institutional framework to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in a more targeted and decisive manner. This has heightened the urgency for countries to strengthen MAWs so they can better fulfill their role and achieve their objectives.

2. Strengthening the gender
institutional framework
as a path to achieve
gender equality

States play a key role in guaranteeing the full exercise of the rights of women and girls. Therefore, States must adopt measures to address the historical inequality that undermines the empowerment of women and girls, which in turn undermines well the development of society as a whole. This requires a State policy that translates into a cross-cutting process of gender mainstreaming in the country's normative framework, public policies and budgets.

The implementation of cross-cutting public policies, regardless of the issue addressed by them, faces common challenges when it comes to the conceptualization and design of actions and the coordination and oversight of their implementation.⁴ These obstacles are even greater in the case of cross-cutting gender policies, which are often the responsibility of not one, but several institutions and bodies within the State structure as a whole. The strategy adopted by many countries to address these obstacles in a comprehensive manner and coordinate gender public policies was the institutionalization of mechanisms specifically designed for this task, the MAWs⁵, understood as the *"guiding bodies of the executive branch to coordinate and advise on mainstreaming gender equality in public policy"*.⁶

The early MAWs in Latin America and the Caribbean were created in the 1980s and 1990s as institutions with various levels within the hierarchy of government structures, and they have been evolving in recent decades, from a women's based approach in the 1980s and 1990s (in line with the Women in Development approach) to a more comprehensive and cross-cutting approach that takes into account the multiple and interrelated forms of inequality faced by women (in line with the Gender in Development approach).

Their creation is part of the consolidation of an international normative framework and the adhesion of countries to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the main international binding legal instrument for the promotion and defense of women's rights, as well as the adoption of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which encouraged States to join intergovernmental agreements and ratify conventions and declarations that forced them to make changes, to which end the institutionalization of entities to advance gender equality policies, such as the MAWs, was essential.⁷

Their tasks typically include leading and coordinating efforts for the “*fulfillment of mandates and national and international legislative commitments related to gender inequality in public policies*”⁸ made by the State; mainstreaming gender in the design, implementation and monitoring of public policies, structures and processes in all the State’s levels and spheres; and leading the processes and execution of special interim measures to accelerate de facto equality between women and men. This role gives the MAWs the potential to make real and substantive progress in terms of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

CEDAW’s General Recommendation No. 6⁹ of 1988, which refers to an “Effective national machinery and publicity”, refers to the need for States Parties to “establish and/or strengthen effective national machineries, institutions and procedures, at a high level of Government, with adequate resources, commitment and authority, to: (a) Advise on the impact on women of all government policies; (b) Monitor the situation of women comprehensively, and (c) Help formulate new policies and effectively carry out strategies and measures to eliminate discrimination. In 2010, General Recommendation No. 28¹⁰ of 2010 emphasized that States parties must ensure that there are strong and focused bodies (national women’s machineries) within the executive branch of the Government that will lead initiatives, coordinate and oversee the preparation and implementation of legislation, policies and programmes necessary to fulfill the State Parties’ obligations under the Convention.

It is worth noting that all the countries in the region have ratified the CEDAW and, therefore, based on the obligations assumed by them as States parties, they must establish or enhance their national mechanisms to fulfill their obligations. It is also important to note that, as part of its national reports, the CEDAW Committee has made a series of observations regarding the need for the majority of countries to enhance their MAWs.

On the other hand, the Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women identified the need for the creation or institutional strengthening of “institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women” as one of its twelve critical areas of concern.¹¹ This document also defines these mechanisms as the central policy-coordinating units inside governments, providing support for government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action provides a series of guidelines on the conditions necessary for national mechanisms to fulfill their role, such as their creation at the highest possible level within the government hierarchy, their ability to influence different sectors, and having adequate resources and processes in place to facilitate the participation of civil society. It also identifies three strategic objectives:

1. create or strengthen national mechanisms and other governmental bodies;
2. integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects; and
3. generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

On the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹², Member States reaffirmed in a political declaration¹³ adopted in 2020, in the context of the 64th period of sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), their willingness to address emerging challenges in the twelve critical areas of concern, including strengthening MAWs. This commitment was reaffirmed in the Agreed Conclusions of the different CSW periods of sessions, which acknowledged the importance of the role of MAWs in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

On the other hand, in his report on the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the UN Secretary General stated that the main challenges faced by MAWs are the lack of adequate financial resources, low levels of technical capacity and lack of political will to prioritize gender mainstreaming in all government policies. He also added that, to strengthen national mechanisms, in addition to ensuring they exist at the highest levels within the government hierarchy and providing them with adequate resources, they must have a clear mandate, be vested with adequate authority within the State and the power to hold other government bodies accountable, as well as the technical and political capacity for successful cross-sectoral coordination.

The same document stated that 192 Member States had some form of “*a dedicated gender equality mechanism or focal point in place*”. Previously, in subsequent reviews on the progress of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in 2000, 2005 and 2010, the catalyst role of national mechanisms for the advancement of women was recognized. And in 2015, these mechanisms were highlighted as “*key drivers for the promotion of gender equality*”.

The Regional Gender Agenda¹⁴, developed throughout the 45 years of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, also contains numerous examples of States that have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen the institutional framework to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Contributions of the Regional Gender Agenda to strengthen the gender institutional framework through Mechanisms for the Advancement of 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 main regional intergovernmental forum on women’s rights and gender equality within the United Nations system. It is organized by ECLAC, as Secretariat of the Conference and, since 2020, in coordination with UN Women. In this context, ECLAC’s member States have adopted a far-reaching, progressive and comprehensive Regional Gender Agenda that guides the countries’ public policies to achieve gender equality in the law and in practice, and guarantees the rights and autonomy of women, adolescents and girls in all their diversity (ECLAC, 2023). The different agreements established in the Regional Gender Agenda have stressed the need to strengthen the State’s gender institutional framework, in addition to raising the level of mechanisms for the advancement of women within the government hierarchy. That level within the institutional hierarchy is one of the indicators considered by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean¹⁵. These agreements have also highlighted the importance of allocating the financial, technical and human resources necessary to ensure the effectiveness of said mechanisms as

key institutions for the promotion of gender equality through public policies and mainstreaming gender in the State's different levels and structures.

One of the most important and recent agreements is the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, adopted in 2016 at the XIII Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. This strategy proposes ten implementation pillars associated with the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. One of these pillars is the gender institutional framework (Pillar 2), which includes five specific measures that stress the need to afford mechanisms for the advancement of women the highest level in the institutional hierarchy so they can fulfill "their role as the governing and managing bodies of policies on gender equality and women's rights and autonomy, and ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the State structure", in addition to strengthening them with sufficient resources, with a particular focus on the subnational and local levels (ECLAC, 2017). In addition to having an implementation pillar exclusively dedicated to the gender institutional framework, the Strategy acknowledges the importance of mechanisms for the advancement of women in other implementation pillars, such as Pillar 9 on Information Systems, which stresses the need to "build or strengthen interinstitutional partnerships between bodies that produce and use information, particularly between machineries for the advancement of women, national statistical offices, academic institutions and national human rights institutions."

Subsequent agreements adopted at the XIV and XV Regional Conferences on Women held in Santiago and Buenos Aires, respectively, reaffirmed the commitment to strengthen the gender equality institutional framework and architecture by affording national mechanisms for the advancement of women the highest level and proposed an increase in the allocation of financial, technical and human resources, in addition to gender responsive budgets and accountability with citizens' participation. Thus, the Regional Gender Agenda shows the continuity of local, national, national and regional efforts to strengthen the gender institutional framework and reflects the

consensus reached over the years on the fundamental role of mechanisms for the advancement of women and the importance of developing the gender architecture initially proposed in the Santiago Commitment to mainstream gender in the State's different powers and levels.

Source: ECLAC's Division for Gender Affairs. ECLAC, 2023(a). 45 years of the Regional Gender Agenda (LC/MDM-E.2022/4/Rev.1), Santiago, 2023.

3. The importance of the level of Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women within the government hierarchy

The level of MAWs within the government hierarchy is a qualitative indicator that describes the status countries have formally assigned to these mechanisms by means of laws, decrees and other official measures.

Considering the importance of the level of national mechanisms within the government hierarchy, ECLAC's Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean¹⁶ proposes a classification that places institutional structures at the following levels:

- **High level:** when mechanisms have a high level within a ministry or the head of the mechanism has a ministerial rank with full participation in the government's cabinet.
- **Intermediate level:** when mechanisms are attached to the office of the President, the head of the mechanism does not participate in the government's cabinet and he/she has a level of relative autonomy (for example, offices attached to the office of the president, secretariats or national institutes).
- **Low level:** when mechanisms are attached to a ministry or have a lower level of authority, such as institutes, councils or other entities.

Some countries with a federal government structure, such as Argentina, Brazil or Mexico, for example, have subnational mechanisms for the advancement of women.

According to data from ECLAC's Gender Equality Observatory, only 60% of countries in Latin America¹⁷ have high-level MAWs attached to a Ministry or whose head has a ministerial rank with full participation in the cabinet. In the case of the Caribbean, 83.3% of MAWs¹⁸ still have a low institutionalization level; in other words, they are attached to a ministry or a lower level authority (vice ministries, institutes, councils or other bodies)¹⁹.

Having an MAW at the highest level within the government hierarchy sends a strong message that the country is really committed to gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as promoting cultural change regarding these

issues. On one hand, having an MAW at the highest level within the government hierarchy sends a political message to society as a whole, the Government itself and State institutions, regarding the role played by gender equality and the empowerment of women in the country's development. The participation of MAWs in cabinet meetings and other mechanisms of coordination with the Presidency also helps to position them within the State's administrative and political hierarchy, gives them increased media coverage and facilitates their inclusion in the public agenda²⁰. Also, while this is not always the case, a higher level within the governmental hierarchy is usually associated with larger budget allocations which, without a doubt, is an essential condition to fulfill the institution's mandate.

At the same time, an MAW with a good position within the government structure and solid institutional support will confer a higher level of authority and credibility on the head of the MAW for the fulfillment of his/her tasks. This can facilitate coordination at the highest level, both with state and non-state actors, as well as negotiations to fulfill their mandate, considering they have the support of an institution clearly positioned within the public structure. This, in turn, will create favorable conditions to reach broad agreements that go beyond public policies and reach all social actors.

For the level of MAWs within the government structure to become an indicator of the country's commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women, the institutional structure must be maintained as a permanent State policy. The level of importance and the existence of MAWs in the different countries is often subject to political changes, which often poses a serious risk for the consolidation of achievements that create a real impact on the lives of women and girls.

4. The transformation of Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

The early MAWs and other mechanisms associated with the gender institutional framework in the region were established between the 1980s and 1995²¹, the year the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted, in a context where the adoption of CEDAW was highly present. Generally speaking, MAWs had a varied institutional design (offices, directorates, commissions, secretariats, councils, institutes and programmes), in most cases with a low level within the government hierarchy. These early mechanisms focused on issues traditionally associated with women, such as health or education, in some cases combined with family-related or social issues, and they were attached to President's Offices or ministries related to the social sector²².

Institutional reforms implemented during this period were mainly related to changes in the State's structure after new governments took over. And few of these mechanisms were created by means of a law; the vast majority were established through decrees, which means their legal basis was weak and they were susceptible of being modified or eliminated with every change of administration.

The approval of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995 was a watershed moment that strengthened MAWs, as it promoted the creation or reform of many of the high-level mechanisms that currently exist in the region, such as the MAWs of Brazil (2003), the Dominican Republic (2010), Paraguay (2012), Nicaragua (2013), Argentina²³ (2019), Ecuador (2022) and Panama (2023), among others. Unlike in the previous period, the majority of these new MAWs were created by law, which reflects a certain degree of legal consolidation.

Despite progress made, a series of reforms to change the structure of MAWs were introduced during this period. These changes could be considered negative, mainly because they lowered their level within the government hierarchy, combined the mandate of different institutions or expanded their tasks to address issues other than those related to women's rights or gender equality. In addition to weakening MAWs, this usually results in an overlapping of tasks between institutions, which is not a good practice from the standpoint of effective and appropriate use of State resources.

To date²⁴, there are sixteen States in Latin America and the Caribbean whose MAWs have a high level within the government hierarchy, which means they are attached to a ministry or the head of the MAW has ministerial rank and is part of the Government cabinet. It is important to note that this classification does not necessarily reflect the MAW's quality of work or level of influence. There are cases where, despite having a high level within the institutional structure, MAWs do not have the means, political support or capacity necessary to negotiate and fulfill their mandate.



CURRENT SITUATION OF MAWS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE SPANISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN²⁵

Country		MAW name	Level within government hierarchy	Type of institution	Ministerial rank	Participates in cabinet	Created by law
1	Argentina	Human Rights Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship	Low	Directorate	No	No	Yes
		Undersecretariat for Protection against Gender Violence, Ministry of Human Capital	Low	Undersecretariat	No	No	Yes
2	Bolivia	Vice Ministry of Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency	Low	Vice Ministry	No	No	Yes
		Plurinational Service for Women, Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency	Low	Service	No	No	Yes
		General Directorate of Decolonization and Depatriarchalization of the Vice Ministry of Decolonization and Depatriarchalization, Ministry of Cultures, Tourism, Depatriarchalization and Decolonization.	Low	General Directorate	No	No	Yes
3	Brazil	Ministry of Women	High	Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Chile	Ministry of Women and Gender Equity	High	Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Colombia	Ministry of Equality	High	Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Office of the Presidential Advisor for Women's Equity	Intermediate	Presidential Advisor's Office	No	No	Yes
6	Costa Rica	National Women's Institute (INAMU)	High	Institute	Yes	Yes	Yes

CURRENT SITUATION OF MAWS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE SPANISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN

Country	MAW name	Level within government hierarchy	Type of institution	Ministerial rank	Participates in cabinet	Created by law
7 Cuba	Federation of Cuban Women	High	Federation	Yes	Yes	Yes
8 Ecuador	Ministry of Women and Human Rights	High	Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes
9 El Salvador	Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women (ISDEMU)	Low	Institute	No	No	Yes
10 Guatemala	Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM)	Intermediate	Secretariat	No	No	No
11 Honduras	Secretariat for Women's Affairs (SEMujER)	High	Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes
12 Mexico	National Women's Institute (INMujeres)	High	Institute	Yes	Yes	Yes
13 Nicaragua	Ministry of Women	High	Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes
14 Panama	Ministry of Women	High	Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes
15 Paraguay	Ministry of Women	High	Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes
16 Peru	Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations	High	Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes
17 Dominican Republic	Ministry of Women	High	Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes
18 Uruguay	National Women's Institute	Low	Institute	No	No	Yes
19 Venezuela	Ministry of People's Power for Women and Gender Equality	High	Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes

The majority of non-Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries established national mechanisms in the 1980s, often within ministries of social affairs or social welfare. But none of these mechanisms were created as units with the core mandate of influencing planning processes in all development sectors, which means they were far from government bodies responsible for planning²⁶. The majority of these divisions were typically located within the social services sector or ministries with a substantial responsibility for social welfare, as in Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat and Saint Lucia. Alternatively, as in Trinidad and Tobago, the division operated within a sector with a variety of interests, such as culture, youth and sports.

A study carried out in 2020 shows that, while several English-speaking Caribbean countries recognize gender equality or equity as an objective in their plans, planning efforts continue to focus, to a large extent, on specific areas such as employment, education and support for gender violence. Only a minority of these national development plans include a comprehensive gender assessment or effectively adopt gender mainstreaming as an integral commitment of their transformative strategies.²⁷

The same study makes reference to some of the challenges faced by national mechanisms –the vulnerability of their achievements, the opposition of national and international groups of interest, the persistent lack of consideration of gender issues in development strategies and their dependence on the goodwill of informal networks of professionals.

However, there are areas where national mechanisms managed to implement successful policy strategic interventions²⁸. One of these areas is that of violence against women. In countries such as Belize, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, and Saint Kitts and Nevis, MAWs have been and continue to be highly influential in terms of improving legal and social services for gender violence victims. In Belize, the Department created a National Working Group on Domestic Violence to promote the development of a national plan on domestic violence. This group, which has been key in the review and oversight of the Law, carried out a study on the enforcement of the Domestic Violence Act.

A key factor in the success of the Caribbean mechanisms lies in their internal decision to formulate policies, allocate additional resources and time of government officials, and the commitment to implement those policies²⁹.

International frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Samoa Pathway, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Montevideo Strategy provide perspectives to improve their credibility, incorporation, influence and quantifiable results by guiding and synchronizing gender mainstreaming initiatives in the different countries. However, these frameworks have not been appropriately leveraged or put into practice in the subregion³⁰.

Antigua and Barbuda's national gender mechanism was created as an Office for Women in 1981. In 1985, after the United Nations Decade for Women, the name of the office changed to Directorate of Gender Affairs³¹. According to a 2019 Government report³², the Directorate was strengthened and repositioned with technical staff to fulfill its tasks. From 2014 to 2019, the Directorate had a small team of technicians with bachelor's degrees in social sciences and development and master's degrees with professional certifications in gender and development. Their technical staff receives support from another team of professionals. The Directorate is also responsible for coordinating the management and operation of the Support and Referral Center, which is a "one-stop mechanism" for sexual violence and gender-based violence survivors³³.

In the Bahamas, an Office for Women was created in 1981. In 1987 the name of the office changed to Unit of Women's Affairs, and in January 1995 to Office for Women's Affairs. In 2016 the Department of Gender and Family Affairs was created, a significant achievement towards gender equality and the empowerment of women in the Bahamas. This transition from Office to Department also included an expansion of its mandate, structure, staff and budget. As reflected in its new name, the Department is responsible for coordinating, advocating and informing public policies for and on behalf of women, girls, men and boys from a gender equality perspective. In December 2018, the Bahamian government strengthened the Department as a National Machinery for the Advancement of Women by increasing the number of staff members. The Department partners with non-government organization around many national and international commemorations to raise public awareness for the prevention of violence against women and girls³⁴.

In 1976 the Barbados Government established a National Commission known as the National Commission on the Status of Women. Its main role was to assess the situation of women in Barbados and make recommendations to improve gender equality. After the dissolution of the National Commission in 1978, the secretariat responsible for supporting the Commission, known as the Office of Women's Affairs, continued to operate with the mandate of overseeing the implementation of the recommendations made by the National Commission. In 1999 the government created the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs, which included the national mechanism, whose name was changed to Office of Gender Affairs and was tasked with mainstreaming gender in all policies, plans and programmes, overseeing that process and carrying out awareness raising activities in the public and private sectors³⁵.

The National Women's Commission of Belize³⁶ was established in 1982 as part of a general effort of the Government to meet a series of international commitments, commencing in 1975, when Belize participated in the United Nation's First World Conference on Women, to improve the situation of the nation's women and girls. In addition, in 2003 Belize created a Women and Family Support Department in the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, which oversees initiatives and programmes to support women and families in Belize.

In Dominica, in 1980 the government created the Women's Office, which eventually became part of the Bureau of Gender Affairs. During its existence, it changed its location several times, until it was finally attached to the Ministry of Youth Development and Empowerment, Youth at Risk, Gender Affairs, Seniors Security and Dominicans with Disabilities³⁷. The Women's Office is gradually shifting towards an approach increasingly focused on gender equality in order to institutionalize this perspective in national policies and plans in line with global trends.

The Government of Grenada³⁸ established a Women's Desk following its national independence in 1974 and during the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985), when countries around the world were establishing national mechanisms for the advancement of women's rights, status and living conditions. The Government ratified the CEDAW in 1990 under the leadership of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. In 1995 a new administration replaced the Ministry of Women's Affairs with a Department in the Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation and Culture, which in 1999 it became the Division

of Gender and Family Affairs of the Ministry of Social Development and Housing. These changes, together with a restriction on staffing linked to structural adjustment policies, have severely affected the capacity of the Division in recent decades³⁹.

Guyana's Gender Affairs Bureau, created in 2015, combined the Office of Women's Affairs, established in 1981, and the Office of Men's Affairs, established in 2011. This Bureau is attached to the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security. One of the achievements of these entities was the creation of a National Resource and Documentation Center for Gender and Development. Previously, the Office of Women's Affairs had also established a national network of Regional Women's Affairs Committees within Regional Democratic Councils.⁴⁰

In Haiti, the Ministry on the Status and Rights of Women⁴¹ was created in 1994 as part of the preparations of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. This Ministry is the main government body responsible for defining, formulating and implementing government policies to address the status and rights of women. The main objectives of the Ministry are the defense and promotion of women's rights, with actions mainly focused on education activities to promote non-sexist behaviors and attitudes targeted to the general public. The review of legal texts and administrative regulations is also part of this framework and the government's gender mainstreaming efforts to support other bodies of the Administration in the application of gender analysis tools.

In the English-speaking Caribbean, Jamaica was the first country to establish a national mechanism for the advancement of women in 1976. The Bureau of Women's Affairs was initially located in the Ministry of Youth and Community Development, but since its creation it has been relocated to different ministries. In 2016, the Bureau of Women's Affairs changed its name to Bureau of Gender Affairs⁴². This change of name resulted in a more inclusive approach to fight violence⁴³, promote gender equality and mainstream gender to achieve balanced economic growth and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In the case of St. Kitts and Nevis, the Gender Affairs Department was established in 1985. This Department is located in the Ministry of Social Development and Gender Affairs. The Gender Equality Policy and accompanying Action Plan is the government's

commitment to mainstream gender in policies implemented in the country. In this context, the policy provides a platform for gender equality in all sectors and areas of social, economic, political and environmental development, so that all citizens and residents can reap the benefits of inclusive, sustainable development⁴⁴.

In Saint Lucia, the Division of Gender Relations is the entity responsible for promoting gender equality. Currently, this Division is located in the Ministry of Public Service, Home Affairs, Labour and Gender Affairs, but it has experienced many changes in terms of its institutional location since its creation in 1986⁴⁵. This has made it difficult for them to carry out sustained actions over time and consolidate certain achievements. The Division's efforts have mainly focused on addressing gender violence, in part due to its limited capacity, and also on running a shelter for domestic violence survivors.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Gender Affairs Division is the institution responsible for everything related to gender equality and women's empowerment. It is located in the Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Persons with Disabilities and Youth, Strengthening the Division, formerly known as Department of Women's Affairs, has been key in the process of increasing its influence and expanding the reach of its mandate. This has allowed the Division to redirect its focus to the areas of gender mainstreaming and development of gender policies⁴⁶.

In 1983 Suriname created an official governmental Women's Bureau, and in 1998 a National Gender Bureau was incorporated in the Ministry of Home Affairs. Its main responsibilities include advising the Government on women's rights and gender affairs and monitoring the implementation of activities to promote gender equality. A gender management system consisting of gender focal points in different ministries was set up to assist in the implementation of, and follow-up on, the Integral Gender Action Plan and the creation of networks with other partners⁴⁷.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the Gender Affairs Division, formerly known as Women's Affairs Division, was established in 1998, and it is attached to the Office of the Prime Minister, which means it has a high level within the government hierarchy to fulfill its mandate. In 2018 the National Policy on Gender and Development, which guides

the actions of this institution, was approved. Its objective is to mainstream gender in all government policies, programmes and projects to improve the quality of life of all genders, conduct research on gender-specific issues, challenge discriminatory social norms, promote collaboration with different stakeholders to promote gender equality, develop inclusive gender policies and address and eradicate gender-based violence⁴⁸.

According to ECLAC's Gender Equality Observatory, 83.3% of MAWs in the non-Spanish-speaking Caribbean have a low level of institutionalization, which means they depend on a ministry or a lower-level authority. The lower level of national gender mechanisms within the government hierarchy has a significant impact on their capacity to introduce significant changes in national plans, programmes and policies.

CURRENT SITUATION OF MAWS IN THE NON-SPANISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN⁴⁹

Country		MAW name	Level within government hierarchy	Type of institution	Ministerial rank	Participates in cabinet	Created by law
1	Antigua and Barbuda	Directorate of Gender Affairs	Low	Directorate within the Ministry of Social Transformation and Human Resource Development	No	No	-
2	Bahamas	Department of Gender and Family Affairs	Low	Department within the Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development	No	No	-
3	Barbados	Bureau of Gender Affairs	Low	Office within the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs	No	No	-
4	Belize	National Women's Commission	Low	Advisory body to the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs	No	No	-
5	Dominica	Bureau of Gender Affairs	Low	Office within the Ministry of Youth Development and Empowerment, Youth at Risk, Gender Affairs, Seniors Security and Dominicans with Disabilities	No	No	-
6	Grenada	Division of Gender and Family Affairs	Low	Division within the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs	No	No	-
7	Guyana	Gender Affairs Bureau	Low	Ministry of Human Services and Social Security	No	No	-
8	Haiti	Ministry on the Status and Rights of Women	High	Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes

CURRENT SITUATION OF MAWS IN THE NON-SPANISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN

	Country	MAW name	Level within government hierarchy	Type of institution	Ministerial rank	Participates in cabinet	Created by law
9	Jamaica	Bureau of Gender Affairs	Low	Office within the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports	No	No	-
10	St. Kitts and Nevis	Department of Gender Affairs	Low	Department within the Ministry of Social Development and Gender Affairs	No	No	-
11	St. Lucia	Division of Gender Relations	Low	Division within the Ministry of Public Service, Home Affairs, Labour and Gender Affairs	No	No	-
12	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Gender Affairs Division	Low	Division within the Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Persons with Disabilities and Youth	No	No	-
13	Suriname	National Gender Bureau	Low	Office within the Ministry of Internal Affairs	No	No	-
14	Trinidad and Tobago	Gender and Child Affairs Division	High	Division within the Office of the Prime Minister	Yes	Yes	-

5. Key aspects to strengthen
Mechanisms for the
Advancement of Women
to advance gender equality

Despite all these achievements, the different MAW models in the region face several challenges, such as weak structures and limited budgets and staffing, all of which may make it difficult for them to perform their tasks and hinder their ability to mainstream gender equality and promote high-impact public policies.

For this reason, the capacity of MAWs to influence and mainstream gender in public policies in other sectors is often compromised. Given these limitations, strong political support at the highest level is essential to reinforce their coordination mandate both within the Government and the different State branches. This aspect is fundamental if we want preserve hard-fought gains, prevent setbacks and promote partnerships to make significant and sustainable achievements.

States in the region have committed to strengthening MAWs in different forums, regional frameworks (agreements in the context of the Regional Conference on Women) and global frameworks (agreed conclusions of periods of sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women and concluding observations of the CEDAW Committee on periodic reports submitted by States). Strengthening MAWs is also an important tool to give sustainability and coherence to States' efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls through the implementation of laws, public policies and gender responsive budgets. This process also requires ensuring MAWs are located at the highest level possible within the government's architecture with the capacity for coordination and dialogue, building their technical capacities and ensuring they have an adequate budget to fulfill their mandate.

Strengthening MAWs must also take into account the gender equality architecture in the different levels of government (local, provincial, regional and federal, as applicable) and the different State powers, such as the legislative and the judiciary, and not only as an aspect to be considered by the executive branch.

Countries can adopt different measures to promote the effective operation of MAWs and, with it, increase their reach and capacity of response to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women, which will in turn have a positive impact in other spheres of the public administration.

These measures may include:

Ensuring the MAW has a specific mandate and functions formally defined at the highest level. This is one of the most important aspects to ensure the proper operation of MAWs. Their mandate can have a very specific scope and focus on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, or else address other issues related to equality in a broader sense, for example, by incorporating issues related to the family, children or vulnerable groups.

The MAW's tasks can also include different competencies, such as providing technical advice to State entities to enable gender mainstreaming in the different government ministries and all State powers and levels of Government; promoting the formulation and implementation of policies, plans and other actions to promote gender equality⁵⁰; promoting studies on gender equality and their impact on the lives of women; supporting education, awareness raising and gender equality campaigns both within and outside of government branches; leading the preparation of State reports on gender equality to be submitted to international organizations, and mainstreaming gender in other reports that do not necessarily focus on gender equality.

Fulfilling the mandate of MAWs can be a complex task, considering it requires technical expertise, a high level of legitimacy and excellent capacity for coordination, not only with the different State powers and levels of Government, but also with civil society, especially feminist and women's organizations and movements. Therefore, it is important to consider this level of complexity from the early stages of formalization of MAWs to ensure their structure appropriately reflects the needs to be met and takes into account the resources necessary for their operation. These needs, which can often exceed those of other public entities, are not always taken into account, which makes it difficult for MAWs to fulfill their mandate.

Regardless of the MAW's level within the government hierarchy, the more limited the mandate and its functions, the more limited their scope for action and advocacy capacity will be. At the same time, to give the MAW more stability, its mandate and specific functions must be formally established at the highest level by means of a law to protect it from changing political interests that may affect its operation.

Argentina

In recent years, Argentina has taken important steps for the implementation of comprehensive public policies to bridge gaps and mainstream the gender perspective. One year after the creation of the Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity (MMGyD) in 2019, the National Cabinet for the Mainstreaming of Gender Policies was created as an interministerial coordination institutional structure. Argentina's Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity was dissolved in December 2023. Some of its competencies were transferred to the Undersecretariat for Protection against Gender Violence of the Ministry of Human Capital, while others were transferred to the Directorate of Human Rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship.

During this period, the MMGyD reached more than 1.8 million women and LGBTI+ persons through policies in the areas of gender equality and comprehensive violence assistance and prevention, and assisted more than 1.6 million victims of gender violence. Their 144 hotline⁵¹ received 1,221,538 calls and carried out more than 93,000 actions to provide advice and assistance in response to gender violence situations. Since 2023 it has been providing assistance in five indigenous and five foreign languages and, through video calls, it provides assistance to deaf and hypoacusic persons. In addition, more than 900 family members and persons close to victims of extreme gender violence received support from the Ministry through their Emergency Assistance Programme⁵². Finally, the Programme to Strengthen Households, Shelters, Halfway Houses and protection devices⁵³ paid for more than 61 devices in the country. In the public sector, 230,000 persons participated in awareness raising activities and received training in accordance with Law 27499 of 2018, known as the Micaela Law⁵⁴, which establishes the obligation to provide mandatory training on the issue of gender and violence against women to all public servants at all levels of government in the executive, judicial and legislative branches.

The MMGyD also promoted care policies and coordinated the Interministerial Working Group on Care Policies⁵⁵, an interinstitutional group made up of 15

State entities, to discuss and plan policies to promote a fairer social organization of care. With support from the UN System⁵⁶, they drafted the “Care with Equality” bill, which promoted the creation of Argentina’s Comprehensive Care Policy System, and in 2023 the Lower Chamber obtained an expert opinion on the expansion of family leaves. They also launched a Federal Care Map⁵⁷, a tool to conduct assessments of the social organization of care by identifying specific needs and critical areas where care networks must be strengthened. This tool provides access to almost 9,000 caregivers and an infrastructure of more than 35,000 care and education facilities.

One of the most important initiatives of the Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity was the launch of the *GenerAR Programme*, which focuses on the consolidation of public policies to ensure the operation of mechanisms to mainstream the gender and diversity perspective in the country. Argentina has more than 2,300 municipalities and local governments in its national territory. Since 2019, more than 1,150 municipalities and local governments have created and/or increased the level of their gender and diversity areas within their government structure. The MMGyD also created the *GenerAR map*, a digital statistical tool that gathers information about institutions, resources and gender and diversity policies at the provincial⁵⁸ and municipal⁵⁹ levels. These maps make it possible to search for institutions specializing in policies on women and diversity, as well as public policies, programmes, assistance services and current laws and regulations to guarantee the rights of women and LGBTI+ persons.

Backing the MAW’s actions with a national strategy that addresses the country’s main needs to achieve gender equality: this will make it possible to define priorities, plan actions in coordination with other State and Government entities and allocate the resources necessary to implement the strategy and make the MAW’s work viable. The implementation of this strategy must also be integrated in the State’s internal and public evaluation and accountability mechanisms. On the other hand, with the MAW in its role as a coordinating entity, this strategy should be validated with the stakeholders participating in its implementation, including the different State and Government entities, as well as civil society, to define, in a clear

and accurate manner, the responsibilities of each individual stakeholder and identify synergies to ensure virtuous cooperation circles.

Chile

Chile's Ministry of Women and Gender Equity, which was created in 2015, is the result of a long period of consolidation of a gender equality institutional framework, the first milestone of which dates back to 1991 with the creation of the National Women's Service. The creation of this service was promoted by the women's and feminist movements after the return to democracy in 1990. Even though it was not attached to a ministry, its National Director was part of the Executive Cabinet and had a State Minister rank. Since its creation, it played a leading role in the formulation of public policies and legislation and exerted increasing influence on the State's gender mainstreaming efforts. Some examples of this leadership are the Ministerial Commitments to Equal Opportunities between women and men and the Gender Management Enhancement Programme (PMG), both of which promoted gender mainstreaming to advance the exercise of the rights of women and girls.

At present, with a government that identifies itself as feminist, the State's gender mainstreaming efforts have been reinforced. The political influence of the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity grew after its inclusion, for the first time, in the Government's political committee, which also increased its influence, both symbolically and in practice, on the State's decision making structures. The Ministry also created the Gender Advisors Network, a mechanism implemented in all of the government's ministries back in 2000 that is currently being strengthened through intersectoral work as part of the State's response to the needs and demands of women, which has highlighted the need for all government entities to implement plans and policies with a gender perspective in a coordinated fashion. For example, in the context of the current regional leadership of Chile's Ministry of Women and Gender Equity in the construction of a Care Agenda, this made it possible for them to work with the Ministry of Social Development and Family on the creation of

a Comprehensive Care System in the country. This process also includes the initiative *Hablemos de Cuidados* ("Let's Talk about Care")⁶⁰, a series of social dialogues held throughout the national territory with the objective of identifying the main needs and proposals of caregiving persons and organizations.

Their efforts to strengthen gender equality are visible in different areas. One example is the creation of the world's first Cooperation Framework with the UN System that integrates a Gender Equality Strategic Pillar, the implementation of which is being co-led by UN Women and UNFPA. Along the same lines, with the objective of establishing the principle of equality and non-discrimination as a guiding principle of the country's foreign policy, Chile launched its Feminist Foreign Policy, which seeks to promote cross-cutting actions to eliminate the obstacles that hinder the exercise of the rights and autonomy of women and girls, both in the international and national scenario and within the institutional framework. They are also working to ensure that the National Strategy to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals that are part of the 2030 Agenda has a roadmap to overcome inequalities, promote the exercise of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights and strengthen democracy, security and inclusive growth with environmental sustainability.

Ensuring the MAW has the resources necessary to fulfill its mandate and perform its specific tasks in an optimal manner: this allocation of resources must be sufficient to maintain a steady and highly specialized team and effectively implement the national strategy to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. In addition, budget allocations must be stable over time and take into account the adjustments necessary to address specific needs that may arise over time. Regardless of their level within the government hierarchy, the majority of MAWs in the region do not have access to the financial or human resources necessary to fulfill their mandate. Both the agreements adopted in the context of the Regional Gender Agenda⁶¹ and the Agreed Conclusions of the different periods of sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women to States Parties following the submission of national reports, make reference, in a general and recurrent manner, to the need to allocate sufficient and regular resources

to MAWs to ensure the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. According to a 2022 study of the Inter-American Development Bank, data on four countries in the region⁶² that have Ministries of Women at the highest level shows their budget allocations only account for 0.18% of the total national budget for the Executive Branch⁶³.

This lack of budgetary resources is also reflected in the limited amount of qualified human resources MAWs usually have to fulfill their mandate and coordination role in the area of gender equality⁶⁴. It is also important to ensure that staff working for MAWs has the technical competencies necessary to address the different issues in connection with which they must provide support to the different State branches and levels of government. These technical competencies should not only include those traditionally associated with the MAWs' work, such as eliminating violence against women or sexual and reproductive health and rights, but also others such as the capacity of their technical teams to work in coordination with those from other areas, such as strategic planning, finance, trade or defense, among others. It is only through this highly qualified technical expertise that it will be possible to ensure that MAWs have a real capacity to influence the formulation of gender responsive budgets, policies and laws.

On the other hand, in a context of multiple and interrelated crises where countries are still struggling with the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic and increases in the cost of energy and food, among others, budgets allocated to MAWs, which are usually low in the majority of countries in the region compared to national budgets, are at risk of experiencing cuts that do not necessarily result in savings for the State. This can have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, whose living conditions are already being affected by those crises.

It is worth noting that at the XV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, States agreed to *“promote and adopt progressive fiscal policies, allocate budgets with a gender perspective and implement specific financing mechanisms to ensure sufficient, nontransferable, sustainable resources that cover all levels and areas of public policy aimed at reversing gender inequalities and guaranteeing the rights of women, adolescents and girls, including the right to care”*⁶⁵.

Mexico

In Mexico, the National Women's Institute (INMUJERES) promotes gender mainstreaming in national development planning and federal expenditure budgeting and programming processes and is also responsible for the formulation of the National Programme for Equality between Women and Men.

In this context, in recent years Mexico has promoted significant changes. In the area of care, INMUJERES has placed gender mainstreaming in the public agenda through a series of initiatives, such as the creation of the National Care System Coordination Group, which is made up of different State institutions with competencies in this field; data collection and the development of tools, such as a methodology to estimate costs and the returns on investments of implementing care services, analyzing their impact on the country's GDP, employment and income; the development of a care map⁶⁶, a tool that allows citizens to find care services and provides information for public policy decision making; and the launch of the Global Alliance for Care⁶⁷, in coordination with UN Women, as a result of the Generation Equality Forum held in Mexico City in March 2021.

In the area of peace and security, INMUJERES promoted the first Women Peacebuilders National Programme (MUCPAZ)⁶⁸ with the aim of promoting women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes in communities and municipalities, in addition to rebuilding the social fabric and social prevention of violence. As of 2022, these women were working in 214 municipalities in 31 of the 32 Mexican states. INMUJERES has also reported that, as of November 2023, there were more than 1,500 women peacebuilder networks in operation that grouped almost 20,000 women.

Another area where significant progress has been made is that of access to land and agrarian property. INMUJERES designed the *"Integral Strategy for Access by Rural and Indigenous Women to Land, Territory and Recognition of their Land Rights"*, in coordination with the Agrarian Prosecutor's Office. In this context, 10,824 agreements were entered into for the sale or assignment of

land rights that benefited 10,830 rural women, and 650 agrarian investigators received training with a gender, interculturality and environmental protection perspective. They have also promoted an increased participation of women in agrarian community assemblies and their representation and oversight bodies. The Agrarian Prosecutor's Office gave advice at 9,899 assemblies for the integration of women as representatives of the community. As a result of this and the work done by women themselves, 33,024 women are now members or alternate members of representation and oversight bodies.

Ensuring the MAW advocates gender mainstreaming in planning and budgeting as part of the State's commitment to promote concrete and transformative measures to close gender gaps between women and men, with a particular focus on women and girls facing multiple and interrelated forms of discrimination and inequality.

In this context, MAWs have made significant efforts to promote gender-responsive budgets as a useful tool to guide, identify and bring visibility to gender equality budget allocations. The purpose is to prevent public budgets from exacerbating gender inequalities that harm the most vulnerable women and girls. This aspect is so important that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies systems to track gender equality and women's empowerment and public budget allocations to that end as an indicator to measure progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

The importance of promoting gender-responsive budgets was reaffirmed in the Political Declaration adopted by States on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action during the 64th period of sessions of the Commission of the Status of Women in 2020. Likewise, the Buenos Aires Commitment, adopted during the XV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean held in 2022, reaffirmed the need to allocate budgets with a gender perspective to ensure sufficient, non-transferable, sustainable resources that cover all levels and areas of public policy aimed at reversing gender inequalities and guaranteeing the rights of women.

In this context, UN Women’s Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean prepared the regional report “Strengthening public financial management to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment. Progress and challenges in Latin America”, taking as reference voluntary reports submitted in 2021 by Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic. The information included in this report shows some progress in the implementation of gender-sensitive budgets compared to 2018, with 2 of the 10 countries having submitted reports that fully met the indicator requirements, and 8 out of 10 reports that partially met the requirements.

Colombia

In 2013, Colombia⁶⁹ introduced a gender policy with action plans to support its implementation, and it has fully incorporated gender equality in its 2018-2022 plan, with a separate chapter aligned to the National Gender Policy. The government also instructed the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit and the Planning Department to develop a gender budget tracer to facilitate tracking of budget allocations. This policy requires the President’s Office for Women⁷⁰ to inform the Parliament about the execution of the genderresponsive budget.

In recent years, Colombia introduced legislation on rural women’s rights, violence prevention, equal working conditions and wages and support for the care economy. The National Planning Department evaluates the execution of resources directed to gender equality using a gender budget tracker required by law. This tracker uses the National Planning and Budgeting System to analyze the resources allocated for gender equality in line with the gender categories reflected in the national policy objectives.

In addition, in Colombia the State’s control bodies track the budget and can use the budget tracker to track gender allocations, the results of which can be used to audit the allocation and execution of resources allocated to gender equality.

Ensuring the MAW has political support at the highest level: this support is an essential condition to guarantee the MAW can fulfill its mandate and specific tasks and, thus, promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. Political support can also reinforce the MAW's coordination role, which will have a positive impact on gender mainstreaming in the different State branches and levels of government. It is also important to highlight the need to ensure the person heading the MAW has a high-level political and technical profile so he/she can perform his/her duties with the best chance of success.

Political support can also be shown by locating the MAW at the highest level within the governmental hierarchy, with full participation in the Government cabinet, sufficient budgetary resources to implement its different initiatives, and steady and qualified staff to address the different needs it must address as part of its coordination role in the areas of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Another important aspect to achieve coherence in the support provided to the MAW is the role played by other women in the Executive branch and the importance assigned to gender equality in the Government plan. The firm support to the institutional framework and the MAW's mandate must be backed by concrete actions implemented by the Executive, from parity in Government decision-making bodies, with women holding high-level positions in all areas of the Public Administration, to the allocation of resources for the implementation of public policies aimed at closing gaps between women and men.

Paraguay

Since the creation of the Women's Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic in 1992, and later on the Ministry of Women in 2012, the institutional framework to achieve gender equality in Paraguay has been evolving to better address the gender-related inequalities that affect Paraguayan women and girls. In this context, the First National Plan for Equal Opportunities for Women was approved for the period 1997-2001, and later renewed for the 2003-2007 period. The National Plan for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men,

which will be effective until 2017, was approved in 2008, and the National Equality Plan for the 2018-2024 period is currently under execution.

More than 25 years after the launch of the first public policy on equality, the Ministry of Women continues to work to improve coordination with the rest of the country's public institutions, with the objective of mainstreaming the gender perspective in all of the State's institutions so they can incorporate the National Plan as a guiding tool to overcome obstacles to the achievement of substantive equality between women and men.

Law No. 5777, on the other hand, was approved in 2016 under the leadership of the Ministry of Women. This law outlines the policies and strategies for the prevention of violence against women, in addition to support mechanisms and protection, punishment and reparation measures, both in the public and private spheres. An aspect worth highlighting is the work of the State's institutions, which have reaffirmed their commitment to gender equality and ending violence against women. The support of high-level authorities to the Ministry has allowed it not only to assume a technical role in the field, but has also helped to position issues such as gender-based violence in institutions that are traditionally more conservative. For example, the Ministry of Women, the Gender Secretariat of the Judicial Branch and the Ministry of Public Defense fully support the implementation of the Law to protect the rights of women living in Paraguay.

Promoting other entities or bodies within the different State branches and levels of government that, under the MAW's coordination, promote gender equality and the empowerment of women: this will allow for the creation of a structure with different bodies or entities working in a coordinated and efficient fashion, considering those entities that have internal mechanisms specialized in the promotion of gender equality are more likely to incorporate this approach successfully. In this regard, the Executive's commitment to MAWs can also result in the creation or strengthening of gender equality units in other ministries that facilitate the MAW's dialogue with different sectors. It is also important to note that in some cases the existence of these units can also precede the creation of the MAW in the country and, therefore, it is

important to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise they may have in the area of public administration with a gender perspective.

Dominican Republic

In 2019 the Ministry of Public Administration and the Ministry of Women approved a resolution that establishes the creation of units to incorporate and mainstream the gender equality approach in public institutions. The role of these units includes, among other things, advising public bodies on the incorporation and mainstreaming of the gender equality approach in the formulation, execution, followup and evaluation of institutional policies, plans, programmes, projects and budgets.

In this regard, the General Directorate of Public Procurement (DGCP) created a Gender Equality Unit with the objective of mainstreaming gender in the area of public procurement as a step to improve the situation of women in different areas of development, contributing to their autonomy and the exercise of their human rights. Thus, they promote actions to increase the inclusion and participation of women-led micro, small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) in the State's Registry of Vendors (RPE) and government procurement processes led by public institutions, which undoubtedly contributes to their development and economic empowerment.

The following are some of the results achieved since the adoption of this measure: 27,060 women vendors; 4,357 women-led MSMEs registered with the MICM; 1,066 women vendors with an MSME certification; 4,042 processes exclusively for women; 7,366 women having won tenders; 138,507 contracts assigned to women and 11,046 women having received training

In addition, the General Budget Directorate has issued manuals on Guidelines and Procedures for the Formulation of a Gender-Responsive Budget in the different stages of the budget cycle to ensure that the different stakeholders involved in the budget formulation undertake actions to promote gender equality.

Generally speaking, the existence of these units varies significantly between countries and also between ministries. For example, Ministries of Education or Health may have, at the very minimum, gender focal points; in other cases, as in ministries of Defense or Economy, this work is more recent and in its early stages. In other cases, working in close coordination with other State entities, and depending on resources available, MAWs can designate a specialized person in one of the entities considered an area of priority, such as planning, budget or statistics, to act as a liaison and build the technical capacities of teams in charge of those areas.

In addition, in the majority of the countries the legislative branch has parliamentary commissions that, under different names (women, gender equality, etc.) are tasked with reviewing bills and existing legislation and monitoring programmes, policies, expenditures and other government actions to address specific issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women. In many cases, these commissions have played a key role in the process of enhancing laws related to gender violence, women's access to health and the advancement of women in the workplace, education, the economy and politics. These commissions can also identify the potential and differentiated impacts of bills or existing legislation on women and men from different backgrounds.

On the other hand, considering the different forms of organization for MAWs the State may adopt, as well as decentralization processes underway in different countries, federal, regional and local governments may have other types of entities operating as MAWs in their corresponding spheres of influence that are extremely important for the materialization of national policies in their territories. Some other countries have more or less developed institutional mechanisms (coordination groups, intersectoral commissions, etc.) with the participation of diverse stakeholders working in different areas to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Countries currently at the forefront of the effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are those mainstreaming gender in their foreign policy, a strategy several countries in the region have already adopted⁷¹. The adoption of a feminist foreign policy, as this trend is also known, cannot be possible without a strong MAW and a Government fully committed to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Mainstreaming

gender in foreign policy means adopting feminist, intersectional and gender transformative approaches based on the incorporation of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in all their diversity, taking into account the multiple and interrelated forms of discrimination they may face.

Ecuador

In Ecuador⁷², the Organic Code for Planning and Public Finance includes an article on gender-responsive planning and budgeting that establishes the obligation of the Ministry of Economy and Finance to issue annual budget guidelines instructing public institutions to include gender equality through the planning and budgeting cycle. Each ministry is responsible for evaluating potential gender impacts, and its policies and programmes have statistical information disaggregated by gender. For example, the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) has data disaggregated by sex, decile and age, data on the *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* (“Human Development Bonus”) programme, and information about different social programmes. All this information is an input for assessments conducted by the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Gender equality objectives are stated in budget annexes and in the classifier that guides spending in gender equality policies to make resources allocated to that end transparent.

The National Council for Gender Equality⁷³, the State General Comptroller’s Office, the National Assembly, the Ombudsman’s Office and civil society can conduct assessments, follow-ups and audits on the execution of programmes and budgets promoted by public institutions.

6. Recommendations

A review of the different countries in Latin America and the Caribbean shows a scenario where States, in line with the international policy framework, have adopted measures to create and strengthen MAWs from the creation of the early MAWs to date. This journey, which has not always been linear, also shows that different countries have followed different paths to accommodate the need to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women based on their political and social reality.

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned aspects, we propose the following recommendations to further strengthen MAWs:

- Promote MAWs as mechanisms at the highest level within the State hierarchy, ensuring they have political support and the resources necessary to fulfill their tasks appropriately, in line with commitments made by countries in the context of the different international and regional instruments on gender equality and the empowerment and autonomy of women;
- Ensure the MAW's specific mandate and tasks are formally established at the highest level with the objective of achieving gender equality between women and men, as well as the empowerment and the autonomy of all women and girls. It is also important to incorporate an intersectional approach that takes into account the situation of women and girls throughout their life cycle, with a particular focus on women facing multiple and interrelated forms of inequality and belonging to traditionally discriminated groups. It is important to take into consideration that, in all cases, MAWs must promote the incorporation of the gender equality approach into public policies with the objective of closing gaps and visibly improving the lives of women and girls;
- Take into consideration the complexity of fulfilling, in the majority of the cases, their specific mandate and tasks for the coordination of multiple spaces and levels and the technical and political management of diverse thematic areas;

- Ensure the national strategy or plan to achieve gender equality is maintained up to date in coordination with the different stakeholders, including feminist and women's organizations, so the MAW's work can fulfill the needs of women and girls at all times;
- Ensure access to necessary, sufficient and predictable resources, both financial and human, so the MAW can fulfill its mandate and specific tasks satisfactorily, and protect those resources from possible cuts that could have a negative impact on the MAW's performance;
- Ensure the MAW has political support at the highest level, reinforcing its role as a public policy coordination body to achieve gender equality and ensuring its participation in the ministerial cabinet. In this regard, promoting gender parity cabinets with a cross-cutting presence of women within the structure of the Executive branch and all areas of government will send a strong political message;
- Facilitate the creation and strengthening of entities in charge of promoting gender equality in other areas of the Public Administration, including the different levels of government and State powers, to promote that the MAW has focal points duly trained with sufficient competencies in the area of gender equality who can reach out to different sectors; and
- Constant dialogue with feminist and women's organizations and movements to maintain open and transparent communication channels to ensure initiatives implemented by the MAW are endorsed and supported by these organizations.

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Annex 1: Evolution
of Mechanisms for the
Advancement of Women
in Latin America and the
Spanishspeaking
Caribbean countries⁷⁴

Argentina

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1983	National Directorate of Women and the Family	-	Creation	None	Directorate	Secretariat for Human Development and the Family	Low
1987	Undersecretariat of Women	-			Undersecretariat	Ministry of Health and Social Action	
1991	Council for the Coordination of Public Policies for Women	Decree 378/1991			Reform	None	Council
1992	National Women's Council	Decree 1426/1992					
2002		Decree 357/2002					
2009	National Woman's Council ⁷⁵	Decree 1836/2009					
2010	National Women's Council ⁷⁶	Decree 326/2010	Creation	Positive	Institute	Ministry of Social Development	Intermediate
2017	National Women's Institute (INAM)	Decree 698/2017			Ministry	Presidency	High
2019	Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity	Decree 7/2019					
2023	Human Rights Directorate	-	-	Negative	Directorate	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship	Low
	Undersecretariat for Protection against Gender Violence	Decree 86/2023	Creation	Negative	Undersecretariat	Ministry of Human Capital	

Bolivia

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1971	National Social Action Board	Supreme Decree 09922	Creation	None	Board	Office of the First Lady - Presidency	Low
1992	National Institute for Minors, Women and the Family	-			Institute		
1993	National Secretariat of Ethnic, Gender and Generational Affairs	Law 1493	Reform		Secretariat	Ministry of Human Development	
1998	Vice Ministry of Gender, Generational and Family Affairs	Supreme decree 24938			Ministry of Sustainable Development and Planning		
2002	Vice Ministry of Women	Law 2412	Creation	Positive	Vice Ministry	Ministry of Campesino, Indigenous, Gender and Generational Affairs	
2003		Law LOPE 2446	Reform			Ministry of Sustainable Development	
2006	Vice Ministry of Gender and Generational Affairs	Decree 28612		Reform		Negative	
2009	Vice Ministry of Equal Opportunities	Decree 29894					
2019	Plurinational Service for Women and Depatriarchalization	Supreme Decree 3774	Reform	Positive	Service	Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency	
2023		Supreme Decree 4958				Ministry of Cultures, Decolonization and Depatriarchalization	

Brazil

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1985	Conselho Nacional Dos Direitos da Mulher	Law No. 7.353	Creation	Positive	Council	Ministry of Justice	Low
2002	Secretaria de Estado dos Direitos da Mulher	-		None	Secretariat		
2003	Secretaria de Políticas para as Mulheres	Law No. 10.683	Reform	Positive	Ministry	Presidency	High
2010		Law No. 12.314					
2012		Decree 7765					
2013		Decree 8030					
2015	Ministério das Mulheres, da Igualdade Racial, da Juventude e dos Direitos Humanos ⁷⁷	Interim measure 696 of October 2015 (which later became Law No. 13.266 of April 2016)	Reform	Negative	Ministry	Presidency	High
2016	Secretaria Especial de Políticas para as Mulheres	Law No. 13.341			Secretariat	Ministry of Justice and Citizenship	
2017	Transfer from the National Secretariat of Policies for Women of the Ministry of Justice and Citizenship to the Ministry of Human Rights	Interim Measure 768/2017		Neutral	Secretariat	Ministry of Human Rights	Low

Brazil

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
2017	Transfer from the National Secretariat of Policies for Women of the Ministry of Human Rights to the Secretariat of Government of the Presidency of the Republic	-	Reform	Neutral	Secretariat	Secretariat of Government of the Presidency of the Republic	Low
2018	Transfer from the National Secretariat of Policies for Women of the Secretariat of Government of the Presidency of the Republic to the Ministry of Human Rights	-				Ministry of Human Rights	
2019	Creation of the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights	Interim Measure		Negative	Ministry	Presidency of the Republic	High
2023	Creation of the Ministry of Women	Interim Measure 1.154 of January 2023, which later became a law	Reform	Positive		Ministry of Women	

Chile

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1969	National Office of Women's Affairs of the Presidency of the Republic		Creation	Positive	Office	General Secretariat of Government	Low
1972	National Women's Secretariat	Decree 1.322			Secretariat	Presidency	Intermediate
1975	Reform - National Women's Secretariat	-	Reform	None	Unit	Division of Civil Society Organizations of the General Secretariat of Government	Low
1991	National Women's Service - SERNAM	Law No. 19.023	Creation	Positive	Service	Ministry of Planning and Cooperation	High
2011		-	-	Neutral		Ministry of Social Development and Family	
2015	Ministry of Women and Gender Equity ⁷⁸	Law No. 20.820	Creation	Positive	Ministry	Presidency	
	National Women and Gender Equity Service	Law No. 20.820, Title IV "Other provisions"	Reform	Neutral	Service	Ministry of Women and Gender Equity	Intermediate

Colombia

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1980	National Gender Equity Department	-	Creation	Positive	Department	Presidency	Intermediate
1990	Presidential Advisory Board for Women, Youth and Family	Decree 1878		None	Advisory Board		
1995	National Directorate for Women's Equality	Decree 1440		None	Directorate		
1999	Office of the Presidential Advisor for Women's Equality	Decree 1182		None			
2010	High Presidential Council for Women's Equality ⁷⁹	Decree 3445	Reform	Positive	Advisor's Office	Vice Presidency	
2014	Presidential Advisor's Office for Women's Equity	Decree 1649		Negative			
2017	Office of the Presidential Advisor for Women's Equity	Decree 672		None			
2019	Office of the Presidential Advisor for Women's Equity ⁸⁰	Decree 179					
2023	Ministry of Equality and Equity - Vice Ministry of Women	Law No. 2.281 - creates the Ministry of Equality and Equity	Creation	Positive	Ministry	Ministry of Equality and Equity	High
		Decree 1075 - adopts structure of the Ministry of Equality and Equity					

Costa Rica

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1974	Office of Programmes for Women and the Family	-	Creation	Positive	Office	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports	Low
1976		Executive decree 5991	Reform	None			
1986	National Center for the Development of Women and the Family	Law No. 7.076	Creation		Center		
1998	National Women's Institute (INAMU)	Law No. 7.801	Reform	Positive	Institute	Presidency	High
2010	National Women's Institute	-		Negative			Intermediate
2014	National Women's Institute ⁸¹	Decree 38489 - MP - POPT		Positive			High

Cuba

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1960	Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) ⁸²	-	Creation	None	Federation	-	-
1997	Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) ⁸³	Agreement of the Council of State		Positive		-	High

Ecuador

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1970	Department of Women	-	Creation	Positive	Department	Ministry of Social Welfare	Low
1980	National Office for Women	-		None	Office		
1987	National Women's Directorate	-			Reform		
1997	National Council of Women (CONAMU)	Executive Decree 764	Creation	Positive	Council	Presidency	Intermediate
2009	Commission on the Transition for the Definition of the Public Institutional Framework to ensure Equality between Men and Women - Commission on the Transition to the Council on Women and Gender Equality	Executive Decree 601		Negative	Commission	National Secretariat of Peoples, Social Movements and Civic Participation	Low
2014	National Council on Gender Equality	Executive Decree 283		Positive	Council	Presidency	Intermediate
2021	Human Rights Secretariat	Executive Decree 93			Secretariat	Ministry of Women and Human Rights	
2022	Ministry of Women and Human Rights	Executive Decree 608			Ministry	Presidency	High

El Salvador

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1989	National Family Secretariat	-	Creation	Positive	Presidency	Secretariat	Low
1996	Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women (ISDEMU)	Legislative Decree 644		None	National Family Secretariat	Institute	
2009		-	National Secretariat for Social Inclusion				
2022		Legislative Decree 472	Reform		Institute	Executive Board appointed by the President of the Republic	

Guatemala

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1981	National Office for Women	Government Agreement No. 24-81	Creation	Positive	Office	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	Low
2000	Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM)	Government Agreement No. 200-2000			Reform	Negative	Secretariat
2012		Government Agreement No. 34-2012					
2014		Government Agreement No. 353-2014					

Honduras

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1994	Government Office for Women	Executive Agreement 097	Creation	Positive	Office	Presidency	High
1998	National Women's Institute (INAM)	Legislative Agreement 232-98			Institute		
2014	National Women's Institute ⁸⁴	Executive Decree PCM 001-2014	Reform	Negative		Sectoral Cabinet for Development and Social Inclusion	
2022	Secretariat for Women's Affairs (SEMujER)	Executive decree PCM-05-2022	Creation	Positive	Ministry	Presidency	

Mexico

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy	
1975	International Women's Day National Programme	-	Creation	Positive	Programme		Low	
1980	National Programme to Integrate Women in Development	-		None		National Population Council		
1994	General Coordination of the National Programme for Women	-		None		Ministry of the Interior		
1996	National Programme for Women, Alliance for Equality (PRONAM 1995-2000)	Federal Official Daily Gazette (DOF: 08/21/1996)		Positive	Government body			
1998	General Coordination of the National Commission for Women (CONMUJER)	Federal Official Daily Gazette (DOF: 08/21/1996)		Positive	Institute ⁸⁵	Presidency		High
2001	National Women's Institute (INMUJERES)	INMUJERES Law (Federal Official Daily Gazette of January 12 2001)		Positive	Government body	Presidency		High

Nicaragua

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1975	Office for Women	La Gaceta No. 292, Decree 101	Creation	Positive	Office	Ministry of Labour	Low
1982	Legal Office for Women	La Gaceta No. 183, Decree 1091				General Secretariat of the Governing Board	Intermediate
1987	Nicaraguan Women's Institute (INIM)	La Gaceta No. 277, Decree 293				Ministry of the Presidency	
1993	Nicaraguan Women's Institute	La Gaceta No. 128, Decree 36-93	Reform	Negative	Institute	Ministry of the Family	Low
1998		La Gaceta No. 102, Law 290					
2007		La Gaceta No. 20, Law 612					Office of the Presidency
2013	Ministry of Women	La Gaceta No. 28, Law 832	Creation	Positive	Ministry	Secretariat of the Presidency	

Panama

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1975	National Commission for the Commemoration of International Women's Day	-	Creation	Positive	Commission	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	Low
1980	National Directorate for Children and the Family	-		None	Directorate		
1989	National Office for Women	-		None	Office		
1993	Department of Women	Presidential Decree		None	Department		
1995	National Women's Directorate	Presidential Decree 77	Reform	Positive	Directorate		
1997	Ministry of Youth, Women, Children and the Family	Law No. 42	Creation	None	Ministry	Presidency	
2005	National Women's Directorate	Law No. 29	Reform	Negative	Directorate	Ministry of Social Development	High
2008	National Women's Institute (INAMU)	Law No. 71	Creation	Positive	Institute		Low
2023	Ministry of Women	Law No. 375 of March 8 2023			Ministry	Presidency	High

Paraguay

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1970	National Office for Women	-	Creation	Positive	Office	Ministry of Justice and Labour	Low
1971	Directorate for the Professional Advancement of Women	-	Reform	None	Directorate		
1992	Women's Secretariat	Law No. 34	Creation	Positive	Secretariat	Presidency	Intermediate
2012	Ministry of Women	Law No. 4.675	Reform		Ministry		High

Peru

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1972	Committee for the Revalorization of Women	-	Creation	Positive	Committee	Ministry of Education	Low
1983	Office for Women	-		None	Office	Ministry of Justice	
1986	Special Commission on Women's Rights	-			Commission		
1988	Office for Women's Affairs	-			Office	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
1987	Commission on Population, Family and Women	-			Commission	Ministry of Education	
1996	Ministry of Women and Human Development	Legislative Decree 866	Reform	Positive	Ministry	Presidency	High
2002		Law No. 27.779		None			
2012		Legislative Decree 1098		Positive			

Dominican Republic

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1982	Directorate for the Advancement of Women	Decree 46	Creation	-	Directorate	Presidency	Intermediate
1999	State Secretariat for Women	Law No. 86/99		-	State Secretariat		
2010	Ministry of Women	Decree 56/10	Reform	Positive	Ministry		High

Uruguay

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1975	Women's Department	-	Creation	Positive	Department	Ministry of Labour and Welfare	Low
1987	National Women's Institute	Presidential Decree 226/87		None	Institute	Ministries of Education and Culture	
1992	National Institute for Family and Women's Affairs	Law No. 16.320	Negative				
2005		Law No. 17.866	Reform	Positive		Ministry of Social Development	
2005	National Women's Institute (INMUJERES)	Law No. 17.930					

Venezuela

Date	MAW name	Legal basis	Creation or Reform	Positive, Negative or None (compared to previous situation)	Type of institution	Attached to:	Level within government hierarchy
1974	Women's Advisory Commission to the Presidency of the Republic	-	Creation	Positive	Commission	Presidency	Intermediate
1979	Ministry of State for the Incorporation of Women into Development	-			Ministry		High
1984	National Office for Women and the Family	-		Negative	Office	Ministry of Youth	Low
1989	Women's Advisory Commission to the Presidency of the Republic	-		Positive	Commission	Presidency	Intermediate
1993	National Women's Council	-			Council		
1999	National Women's Institute (INAMUJER)	Law on Equal Opportunities for Women		Negative	Institute	Ministry of Health and Social Development	Low
2008	Ministry of State for Women's Affairs	-		Positive	Ministry	Presidency	High
2009	Ministry of People's Power for Women and Gender Equality	Decree 6.663	Reform	None			

Endnotes

- 1 ECLAC (2017). [Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030.](#)
- 2 [Achieving gender equality will take 300 years at the current pace.](#)
- 3 ECLAC, 2017. [Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030](#), (LC/CRM.13/5), Santiago de Chile.
- 4 OECD. 2021. [“Policy framework for gender-sensitive public governance”.](#)
- 5 “[Institutional framework of the Ministry of Women: coordinating efforts to enhance impact](#)”. GDLab Gender and Diversity Knowledge Initiative, Inter-American Development Bank and Government of Canada. June 2022.
- 6 “[Los Mecanismos Nacionales y Regionales de las Mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe Hispano](#)”. ONU Mujeres, 2016.
- 7 True, Jacqui & Mintrom, Michael (2001) “Transnational networks and policy diffusion: The case of gender mainstreaming”, *International Studies Quarterly*.
- 8 “[Los Mecanismos Nacionales y Regionales de las Mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe Hispano](#)”. ONU Mujeres, 2016.
- 9 [General Recommendations adopted by the Committee on the elimination of discrimination against women.](#)
- 10 [On the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.](#)
- 11 While the creation of national mechanisms was an idea present at the First World Conference on Women held in Mexico in 1975, it was precisely after Beijing that an increasing number of countries made the decision to strengthen their national mechanisms that, to a greater or lesser extent, already existed in many of the Member States.
- 12 “[Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly](#)”.
- 13 “[Political declaration on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the 4th World Conference on Women](#)”
- 14 [Link.](#)
- 15 [Link.](#)
- 16 Gender Equality Observatory: <https://oig.cepal.org/en>
- 17 Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).
- 18 In the case of the non-Spanish speaking Caribbean, only Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago have a Ministry.

- 19 Last accessed on June 15 2023.
- 20 "Institutional Framework of the Ministries of Women: Coordinating Efforts to Enhance Impact". GDLab Gender and Diversity Knowledge Initiative, Inter-American Development Bank and Government of Canada. June 2022.
- 21 There are even entities that date back to the 1970s, for example, the National Women's Secretariat of the National Presidency of Chile; Costa Rica's Office of Programmes for Women and the Family of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports; Ecuador's Department of Women of the Ministry of Welfare; Nicaragua's Office for Women of the Ministry of Labour; Paraguay's National Office for Women of the Ministry of Justice and Labour; Peru's Committee for the Revalorization of Women of the Ministry of Education, and Venezuela's Ministry for the Incorporation of Women into Development. Link.
- 22 "Los Mecanismos Nacionales y Regionales de las Mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe Hispano". ONU Mujeres, 2016.
- 23 Argentina's Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity was dissolved in December 2023.
- 24 As of August 2023.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Hosein, G., Basdeo-Gobin, T., & Gény, L. R. (2000). "Gender mainstreaming in national sustainable development planning in the Caribbean", Studies and Perspectives series-ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, No. 87, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Patricia Mohammed (2016). "Gender Equality and Gender Policy-Making in the Caribbean", In Public Administration and Policy in the Caribbean, edited by Indiana Minto-Coy and Evan M. Berman, Boca Raton: Taylor and Francis Group, 2016, pp. 415-441.
- 30 Hosein, G., Basdeo-Gobin, T., & Gény, L. R. (2000). "Gender mainstreaming in national sustainable development planning in the Caribbean", Studies and Perspectives series-ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, No. 87, Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)..
- 31 Rawwida Baksh (2014). Country Gender Assessment, Vol 1. Caribbean Development Bank.
- 32 The Government of Antigua & Barbuda (2019). Review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 2014-2019 Report.
- 33 Ibid
- 34 Government of the Bahamas (2019). Bahamas's submission for National Review for Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, Beijing+25, p.09 and p.66.

- 35 Concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Barbados (1992)
- 36 [Link.](#)
- 37 [Link.](#)
- 38 [Link.](#)
- 39 Government of Grenada, 2014. Gender Equality Action Plan 2014-2024. [Official document of the Grenada government/Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan, 2014](#)
- 40 International Labour Organization (ILO), 2018. [Gender at work in the Caribbean: The Synthesis report.](#)
- 41 [Link.](#)
- 42 Cabinet decision No. 8/16 of March 21, 2016.
- 43 [Link.](#)
- 44 [Link.](#)
- 45 [Link.](#)
- 46 [Link.](#)
- 47 [Link.](#)
- 48 <http://opm-gca.gov.tt/Gender/WhatWeDoatGender>
- 49 As of August 2023.
- 50 ECLAC, 2017. Gender equality plans in Latin America and the Caribbean: Road maps for development (LC/PUB.2017/1-P) Santiago de Chile. <https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/41015-gender-equality-plans-latin-america-and-caribbean-road-maps-development>
- 51 <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/generos/linea-144>
- 52 [Link.](#)
- 53 [Link.](#)
- 54 <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/generos/ley-micaela>
- 55 [Link.](#)
- 56 UN Women and International Labour Organization (ILO)
- 57 [Link.](#)
- 58 <https://mapagenerar.mingeneros.gob.ar/fase1>
- 59 <https://mapagenerar.mingeneros.gob.ar/>
- 60 Developed in coordination with UN Women's Office in Chile.
- 61 For example, the Santiago Commitment (2020) or the Buenos Aires Commitment (2022), among others.
- 62 Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Peru.

- 63 “Institutional Framework of the Ministries of Women: Coordinating Efforts to Enhance Impact”. GDLab Gender and Diversity Knowledge Initiative, Inter-American Development Bank and Government of Canada. June 2022.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Buenos Aires Commitment, paragraph 27.
- 66 In collaboration with Colegio de México and UN Women.
- 67 <https://alianzadecuidados.forogeneracionigualdad.mx/>
- 68 In coordination with and thanks to funding from the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System, with support from UN Women.
- 69 Information compiled based on UN Women’s regional report (2023). Strengthening public financial management to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment. Progress and challenges in Latin America.
- 70 The report was submitted by the country prior to the creation of the Ministry of Equality and, therefore, the competent entity at the time was the President’s Office for Women.
- 71 Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico, among others.
- 72 Information compiled based on UN Women’s regional report (2023): Strengthening public financial management to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment. Progress and challenges in Latin America.
- 73 The report was submitted by the country prior to the creation of the Ministry of Equality and, therefore, the competent entity at the time was the National Council for Gender Equality.
- 74 Information as of August 2023, based on: ONU Mujeres Oficina Regional (2016). Los mecanismos nacionales y regionales de las mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe Hispano.
- 75 The National Coordination for the Prevention, Assistance and Eradication of Violence against Women is created. (Law 26.485 identified the National Women’s Council as the leading body in charge of the design of public policies on violence against women).
- 76 It changed its name to National Women’s Council (using the plural instead of the singular) to reflect a more inclusive vision of the diversity of women targeted by the public policies it implements and coordinates.
- 77 Its competency was changed, so it is no longer dedicated to women’s affairs exclusively, but also to human rights, youth, the elderly, minorities, persons with addictions and racial equality. This ministerial reform combined the above-mentioned ministries and their portfolios. The responsibility for mainstreaming gender in public policies was eliminated.
- 78 Since 2022 it has been part of the government’s first Political Committee, a breakthrough in the history of the public administration.

- 79 Its tasks were expanded
- 80 [Link](#).
- 81 It regained its ministerial rank.
- 82 It was created as a non-government organization that, despite having influence on public policies, cannot be considered an MAW. It was not a State entity.
- 83 It was recognized as an MAW by the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba. Without losing its non-government status, the FMC became part of the General Secretariat of the Council of State to lead the Commission of Assistance to Women, Children and Youth of the National Assembly of People's Power and coordinate actions for gender equality with ministries and government bodies ([link](#)). These characteristics have led ECLAC's Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean to consider the FMC as an MAW with a high level within the government hierarchy. However, it does not fit that category under CEDAW because it is not precisely a state mechanism.
- 84 It was transferred from the President's Office to the Secretariat of the Interior and Population, which is part of the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion. It has maintained its autonomy and ministerial rank (the head of the Institute has a ministerial level).
- 85 Similarly to Costa Rica, Honduras and Mexico, the head of the institute has a ministerial rank and participates in the ministerial cabinet, and the institute has autonomy and its own patrimony.



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