



Progress of women in colombia 2018:

**Transforming the economy to
guarantee rights**

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Progress of women in Colombia 2018: Transforming the economy to guarantee rights

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Prologue

With the promise of not leaving anyone behind, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda proposes important challenges, with one of the most important being achieving a 50-50 planet in terms of substantive equality, which represents guaranteeing the full exercising of women's rights – and the recognition of their talent and potential to contribute to development. For the first time, countries have set a date for putting an end to violence and all forms of discrimination against women and girls.

From this perspective, it has been demonstrated that closing the gender gap is, in addition to a human rights commitment, a question of efficiency and competitiveness. Today the evidence is clear: countries, societies and companies that have increased gender equality enjoy higher levels of growth and better performance. Without equality between men and women, no society can achieve the desired three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres, has declared that to support faster progress for women isn't just morally correct, but it also makes political and economic sense. To achieve equality it is necessary to eliminate all forms of discrimination, open doors to the potential of women and implement measures to include the most vulnerable groups such as migrant, rural, indigenous and afro-descendent women and girls, as well as those females that live with some form of disability or in poverty conditions, among others.

In this way, investing in women's economic empowerment directly contributes to gender equality, the eradication of poverty and inequalities and inclusive economic growth. Women with access to and control of economic resources more easily achieve breaking the cycles of violence and poverty, can establish more equal relationships and strengthen their leadership in development, democracy and peacebuilding.

Taking this into account, and in line with the emblematic report prepared by UN Women: Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016. Transforming economies to guarantee rights and its regional edition for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2017, UN Women presents the national report: Progress of Women in Colombia 2018: Transforming the economy to guarantee rights, which presents progress made, limitations and opportunities for the economic empowerment of women and their full participation in the country's economy and development. It also includes examples of initiatives that help improve women's access to their social and economic rights.

From all of us at UN Women, we make an appeal to governments, academics, companies and civil society to take on the recommendations proposed in this report so that gender equality in Colombia, beyond a right guaranteed by law, so that equality may be the guiding thread in all public policies, budgets and programmes; in such a way that it becomes a vital element for sustainable prosperity, culture, development and peace in Colombia.

This agenda for equality commits us to a profound, real and visible transformation of communities, of the lives of women and men; not only in aspirations, but also in facts.

We know what we need to do to achieve a 50-50 planet and we have the responsibility to make the talent and available resources available so that we can reach this goal.

Ana Gúezmes García

Country Representative UN Women Colombia

01

The economic empowerment of women in Colombia: slow, inadequate and unequal progress

1.1 The regulatory framework and gender equality as the foundation for a more prosperous, resilient and equal Colombia

There is a global and national consensus regarding gender equality, not only as a fundamental human right, but also as the necessary foundation to build peaceful, prosperous and sustainable societies.¹ For this reason, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as a central and indispensable element for development, democracy, peace-building and security.

The Colombian state has made a series of binding international commitments to make gender equality and the rights of women and girls a reality. These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Convention of Belem do Pará, 1994). These international commitments are reflected in the development of a national framework of constitutional and legal guarantees for women's rights and gender equality.

Since the Constitution of 1991, Colombia has been recognized as a Social State of Law and as such, has committed itself to ensuring basic living conditions and equality for all its citizens. This unprecedented expansion of women's rights in legal frameworks, through formal equality or in the law, is fundamental progress recognized by UN Women.

The following are some of the main regulatory advances that the Colombian State has established in favor of women's rights and gender equality: Law 581 of 2000, which promotes and makes effective the participation of women at decision-making levels in different branches of government; Law 1257 of 2008, to prevent, respond to and punish all types of violence against women; Law 1413 of 2010, which requires that the care economy is included in the National Accounts System (SNA); Law 1496 of 2011 for equal pay; Law 1475 of 2011, which established several affirmative actions for the political participation of women; Legislative Act 02 of 2015, which included the principles of

parity, alternation and universality in the Constitution; and Law 1761 of 2015, which created femicide as a criminal offense in the penal code. (See Illustration 1).

In addition to regulatory frameworks, institutional measures have been adopted at the national level, such as the creation of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Equality for Women (CPEM), as well as Secretariats of Gender in 16² of the 32 departments and in more than 20 municipalities and cities in the country.

Another aspect that stands out is the formulation of public policies that establish concrete mechanisms to implement this agenda, included in: national development plans that have established specific gender equality mechanisms; the formulation and adoption of a National Public Policy on Gender Equality for Women; and more recently, the creation of two related National Councils for Social and Economic Policy (CONPES 161 and 3784), in addition to CONPES Document 3918, which calls for the fulfilment of the SDGs.³ Also noteworthy is the strict inclusion of a cross-cutting gender equality-based approach in the, “Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace”, signed by the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP in November 2016.

While there is still room for improvement, the regulatory, institutional and public policy framework in Colombia contributes to the guaranteeing of the fulfilment of the rights and opportunities for all Colombians. However, across Latin America, the call for action made by the CEDAW is fundamental: in highly unequal societies, formal or legal equality is not enough; and laws, public policies, government plans and actions to ensure equality between men and women are not enough. In this sense, states are obligated to do more, to use all available means to achieve gender equality and equality of results, and subsequently to achieve signifi-

cant equality in the actions to make this a reality experienced by women.

Physical autonomy, full participation in decision-making, economic empowerment, access to a life free of violence and discrimination are objectives to be achieved for the diverse range of women in Colombia: adolescents, girls, elderly women; women from cities and rural settings, indigenous women, afro-descendants, migrants, displaced women, refugees, disabled women, women living with HIV/AIDS, women living in poverty, those deprived of their liberty, women with different sexual orientations and others.

Closing the gap between formal or de jure equality, and substantive or de facto equality, is without a doubt the primary structural challenge in making sustainable development and peace a reality. Stronger public policies, information systems, budgets and investments are needed to accelerate change, as well as the development of social participation mechanisms and accountability.

Disaggregated information is needed to make progress. Data needs to be disaggregated not just by sex, but also by age, geographic location, racial and ethnic origin, socio-economic level, disability condition, etc. However in the country, there is information for only 54% of SDG Indicators, 30% have partial information or require improvements, and 16% do not have the necessary information or lack a defined methodology.⁴ In this scenario, the joint effort between the Government of Colombia through the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) and UN Women contributes to having accurate, relevant, sufficient and timely information; the strengthening of gender equality policies and women's rights; and the analysis of barriers and progress in the fulfilment of the commitments made by Colombia through an inter-sectional and territorial approach.



Illustration 1

Key regulations for the guaranteeing of women's rights in Colombia

Non-violence



- Law 1257 of 2008. Prevention and punishment of violence against women.
- Law 1448 of 2001. Victims Act.
- Law 1542 of 2012. Ex officio investigation of crimes of domestic violence and non-payment of child support.
- Law 1652 of 2013. Criminal proceedings with children and adolescents who are victims of sexual violence.
- Law 1719 of 2014. Access to justice for victims of sexual violence during the armed conflict.
- Law 1761 of 2015. Femicide. (Rosa Elvira Cely).
- Law 1773 of 2016 and Law 1639 of 2013. Injuries caused by chemical agents.

Public management with a gender equity approach



- Law 82 of 1993. Female heads of household
- Law 823 of 2003. Equal opportunities for women
- Law 1009 of 2006. Gender Observatory
- Law 1434 of 2011. Creation of the Legal Commission for Women's Equity.
- Law 1450 of 2011. National Development Plan 2010 -2014. Formulation of the National Public Policy on Gender Equity. Conpes 161
- Law 1753 of 2015. National Development Plan 2014 - 2018. Creation of the Department for Rural Women. Formulation of public policy for rural women. Evaluation of the public policy on gender equity and victims.

Political Participation



- Law 581 of 2000. Quotas for women in decision-making spaces.
- Legislative Act 01 of 2009. Principle of gender equity in political parties.
- Law 1475 of 2011. Political reform. 30% female participation in lists of candidates. Payments of 5% in proportion to the number of women elected. 15% allocated to women's training.
- Legislative Act 02 of 2015. Balance of powers. Principles of parity, alternation and universality.
- Law 1757 of 2016. Statutes for participation

Other measures for economic empowerment



- Law 731 of 2002. Rural women.
- Law 1413 of 2010. Inclusion of the care economy in the National Accounts System. Recognition of unpaid domestic work. Implementation of the Time Use Survey (DANE).
- Law 1537 of 2012. Priority access to housing for female heads of household.
- Law 1700 of 2013. Multilevel networks or marketing.
- Law 1876 of 2017. National agricultural innovation system.
- Law 1900 of 2018. Gender equity in land allocation, rural housing.

Labor Market



- Law 1496 of 2011. Pay equity.
- Law 1788 of 2016. Service premium for domestic workers.
- Law 1822 of 2017. Extension of maternity leave to 18 weeks.
- Law 1823 of 2017. Family-friendly breastfeeding rooms in workplaces.
- Law 1857 of 2017. Labor flexibility. Measures to protect the family.

Source: UN Women, 2018

1.2. For more than two decades, the guaranteeing of women’s rights in Colombian has made significant progress, but inequality continues

Social spending had its first major increase with the mandate of the Constitution of 1991, which introduced new obligations for the state in terms of the rights to education, health, and social protection. Social spending practically doubled in the years following the passing into law of the new Constitution, moving from 8% of the GDP to 19% by the end of the century, while in 2015 it was 21% of the GDP (see Graph 1).

In terms of the right to education over the last 10 years, significant progress has been made for women in Colombia. Between 2006 and 2017, women almost doubled their participation in education, moving from 32.8% to 58.5%.⁵ In 2016, 6 out of every 10 women between 17 and 21 years old were enrolled in a higher education institution, compared to 5 out of 10 men.⁶

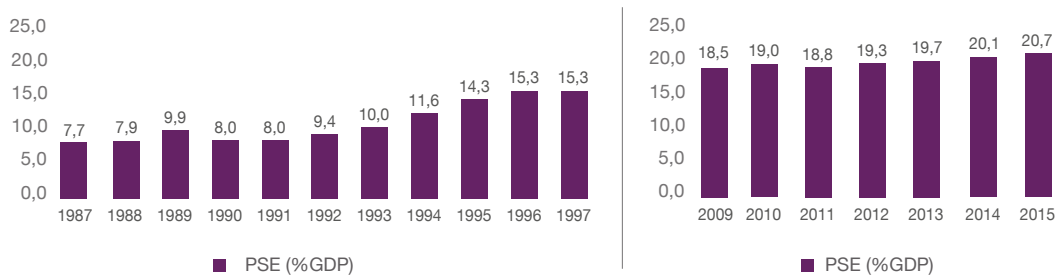
With respect to health care coverage, the country has made significant progress in the last 10 years, almost achieving universal coverage for both sexes. In 2017, 95.8% of women

and 93.0% of men had health care.⁷ However, there are difficulties with respect to the quality of health services.

With respect to their contribution to the economy, female labor participation climbed significantly at the end of the last decade, moving from 46% in 2008 to 54% in 2012. However, over the last few years (2014-2017), labor participation has plateaued around 54% see Graph 2), which leaves Colombia two percentage points below the average in Latin America, which is 56%.⁸ In comparison with men, the labor participation gap has remained almost constant with a difference of more than twenty percentage points, moving from 24.7% in 2008 to 20.3% in 2017, with a slower reduction evident in the last four years.

The proportion of women without their own income has decreased considerably over the last decade, moving from 41% to 27%, with a resulting reduction in the gap between men and women by 10 percentage points, moving

Graph 1.
Relative share of public social expenditure as a percentage of GDP (1987 - 2015)

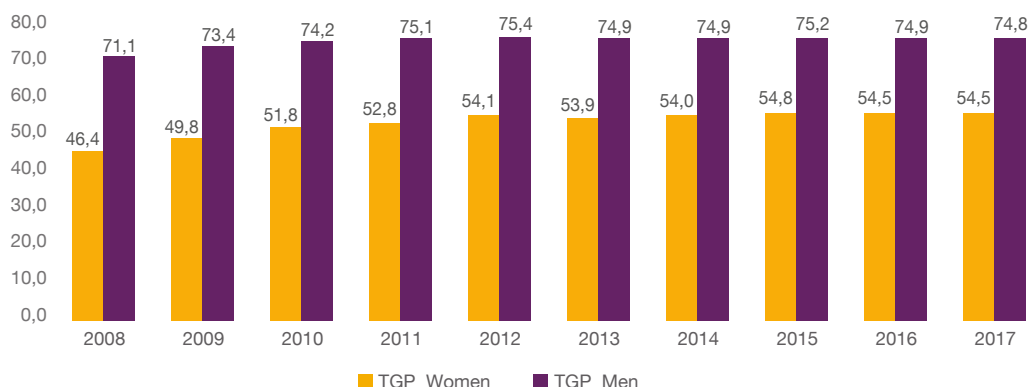


Source: Fedesarrollo (1998). “Evolution of the Social Public Expenditure in Colombia 1987 - 1997”

Source: United Nations Database on social investment in Latin America and the Caribbean 2009 – 2015 (2018) .

Graph 2.

Percentage change in the labor force participation of women and men (2008 - 2017)



Source: DANE - Integrated Households Survey, 2008 - 2017

from 27% in 2008 to 17% in 2017 (see Graph 3).⁹ Without a doubt, the increase of female labor participation and female-led enterprises, as well as their participation in productive processes, have contributed to generating their own income, improving their autonomy and important roles in the economy.

In addition to the issues described above, women have been victims of forced displacement, land dispossession and sexual violence and other crimes in the framework of the Colombian armed conflict. As a result of the decrease in the conflict and with support from the government, international cooperation agencies and NGOs, some women have had their rights restored with reparation measures and access to justice, but this is not a large percentage of the total of women victims. The state has adopted programs and resources to support women victims on issues such as land restitution, income generation and preventing sexual violence, among others.

In addition, 60 years after women first exercised the right to vote (December 1957), progress to guarantee their full citizenship and par-

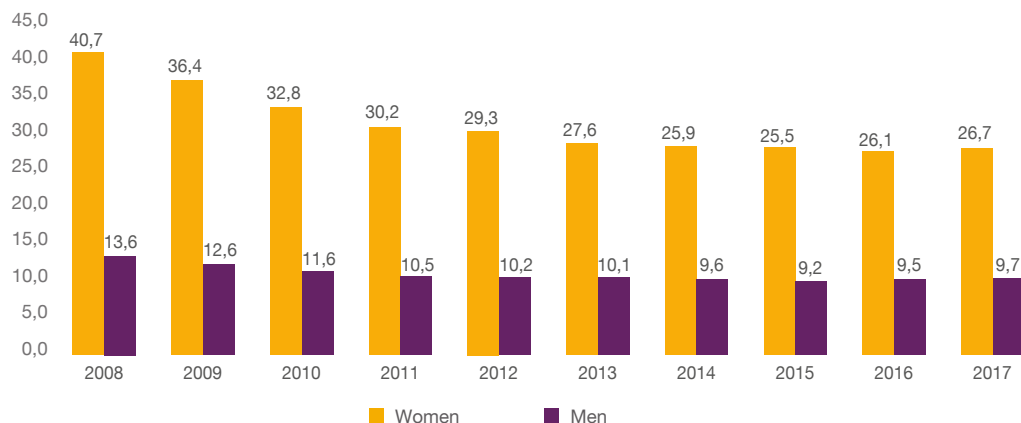
ticipation has been significant, yet it has also been slow and insufficient. Currently Colombian women are underrepresented in political decision-making bodies, with women forming only 19,7% of the total number of elected members of Congress. At the local level, women hold 17% of the seats in departmental assemblies, 18% in municipal councils, 12% in mayoral offices and 15% in governorships.

By analyzing the participation of women in the eight Congressional elections held since the Constitution of 1991, there has been a substantial increase in the election of women to this body. In 1991, an average of 7.7 women were elected to the Senate and House of Representatives, while in 2018 it is 20.3. Greater female participation in the Congress of the Republic corresponds to the periods in which a gender quota has been applied, which was established by Law 1475 of 2011.

In summary, 60 years after attaining the right to vote, the increase in female representation in Congress has only been 17%. While it does represent an increase, it is still too slow and insufficient.

Graph 3

Percentage change of the population aged 15 and older without their own income, by sex (2008-2017)



Source: UN Women calculation based on DANE data.

Derived statistics: Monetary poverty 2008 - 2017

1.3. Without decisive measures to maintain what has been accomplished, gender gaps in the country could deepen

Despite having enjoyed a prolonged period of economic growth that reduced labor participation inequality gaps between women and men, in 2017 the rate corresponding to women (Overall Participation Rate - OPR) was 20.3 percentage points below the rate for men (see Graph 2)¹⁰.

The persistence of these gender gaps is worrisome when taking into account the increased sensitivity of female labor participation to economic dynamics in Colombia. Between 2008 and 2017, when the average real GDP growth was 3.7%, the OPR of men increased by 3.6% while the estimated increase for women was 8.4%.¹¹ Therefore, there is an urgent need to adopt measures to preserve and outperform the achievements of the last decade, to close gaps and at the same time, ensure the fulfilment of the

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a target for the national government and in particular, to provide, “decent work and economic growth” (Sustainable Development Goal # 8).

One of the greatest achievements in the country in the 21st century is the reduction of monetary poverty by 15 percentage points in less than a decade, moving from 42% in 2008 to 26.9% in 2017. Despite this, there is a lag with respect to women. This was shown in the female poverty index, which expresses the relationship between poverty rates of women 20 – 59 years old and the corresponding rate for men in the same age group. This grew from 102.5 women living in poverty for every 100 men in the same conditions in 2008 to 120.3 women in 2017 per 100 men (see Graph 4).



In 2017, among male-headed households, the level of monetary poverty reached 25.5%, compared to an estimated 29.7% for female-headed households, representing a 4.2% gap. Likewise, when the head of the household is without work, a situation that affects women to a greater degree, the poverty rate is nearly 47.8%¹².

In the background of this situation are aspects related to household structure and the traditional roles assigned to women, other market factors and those related to power structures. Normally, unpaid domestic work is disproportionately carried out by women and female-headed households usually have more people in a situation of dependency. For the period 2016 – 2017, women spent an average of 7 hours and 14 minutes performing activities not covered by the SNA, which is a 9-minute decrease compared 2012 – 2013, but it still represents more than double the estimated time that men perform these activities, which is an average of 3 hours and 25 minutes.¹³

In the case of rural women, even though the time dedicated to activities not covered by the SNA in 2016-2017 decreased by 20 minutes compared to 2012-2013 (moving from 8 hours and 12 minutes to 7 hours and 52 minutes), it continues to be more than double the amount of time spent by men performing the same types of tasks in rural settings.¹⁴

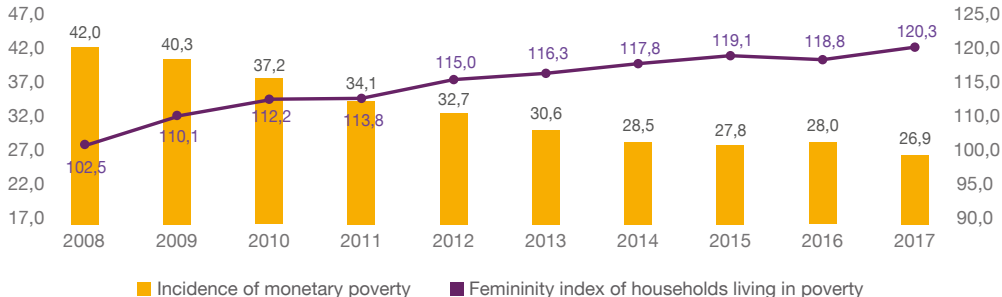
For the 2012 – 2013 period, the economic valuation of unpaid domestic and care work was equivalent to 20.5% of the 2012 GDP.¹⁵

This is greater than the participation of other economic sectors such as wholesale and retail trade or manufacturing, which represent 14.8% and 13.1% of GDP in 2012, respectively.

When entering the labor market, women are paid less, either due to gender discrimination or because a large proportion work in the informal economy.

Without economically empowering women and reducing their disproportionate unpaid workload, poverty eradication, as called for in the first SDG, will remain out of reach.

Graph 4.
Percentage change in the incidence of monetary poverty and the femininity index of households living in poverty (2008-2017)



Source: UN Women calculation based on DANE data.
Derived statistics: Monetary Poverty 2008 – 2017.



1.4 Understanding what obstacles slowed women's progress in a period of growth is essential for facing an economic slowdown scenario

In addition to the poverty dynamic that women in Colombia face, it is necessary to consider two aspects that tend to exacerbate it. The first is intrinsic to the consequences of the armed conflict that the country faced for decades and resulted in forced displacement (1 out of every 2 victims of the armed conflict is a woman).

A larger number of households, a higher rate of dependence, a greater care responsibility for minors, higher unemployment and less education have been described as characteristics of households with women victims of forced displacement compared to house-

holds living in poverty in receptor municipalities, many of whom are indigenous or afro-descendant, which doubles their condition of vulnerability.¹⁶

A second point of interest when assessing the situation of poverty among women in the country is related to migration from Venezuela. Regarding this aspect, it is important to highlight the precarious conditions that women face when entering Colombia as a result of the crisis in their country, which results in them falling prey to growing labor informality and losing possible access to the social protection system.

1.5 Colombia has experienced a silent, incomplete and unequal revolution in family dynamics

The increase of women participating in the economy has been facilitated by factors such as a reduction in the fertility rate, which was 2.3 children per woman in 2015,¹⁷ an increase in the education level of women, who are attending higher education institutions to a greater degree than men, and changes in the size and composition of families. A gender-based approach is an opportunity to significantly increase the contributions of women to households and the economy.

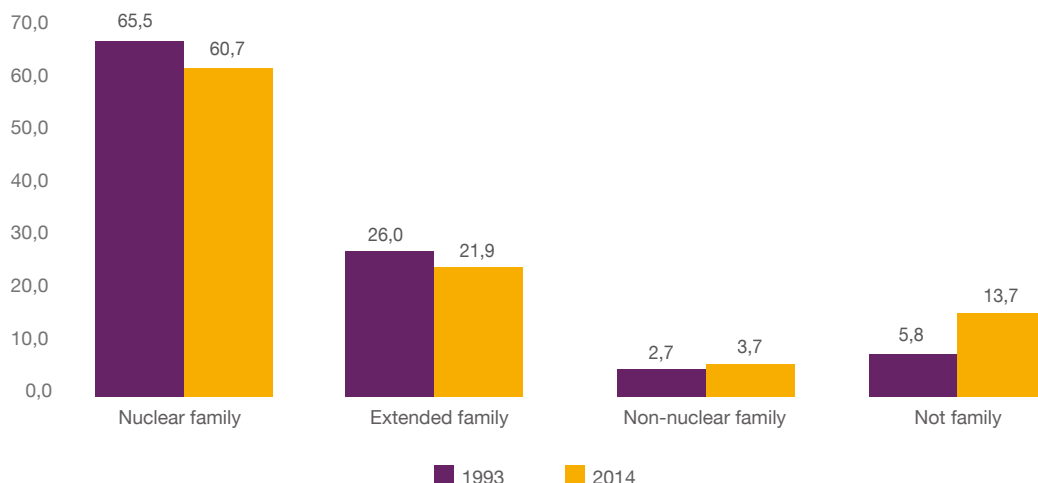
Women have expanded their roles as income generators and many of them have become the main providers for their households. In the country, approximately one-quarter of women are the main providers in their households, although this is less than the regional average (32%).¹⁸ This average tends to increase in both higher and lower socio-economic levels. These household structural changes are also

seen in the increase of single-parent households, of which female-headed households make up approximately 85%.¹⁹

There have also been significant household structural changes, with large nuclear families decreasing and non-family structures showing a large increase, having doubled since 1993 (see Graph 5).²⁰

Despite these changes, there are dynamics that persist in the domestic sphere that limit female empowerment. Teenage pregnancy, marriage and civil unions involving under-age girls and domestic violence, which is reported by one in three women in a marital relationship in the country, are the strongest expressions of inequality within families.²¹ These dynamics have created new economic risks for women, particularly those with low levels of labor integration and low incomes.

Graph 5.
Percentage distribution of households by typology (1993 - 2014)



Source: National Planning Department - 2015.
 Typologies of Families in Colombia: Evolution 1993 - 2014

Moreover, as mentioned above, women in the country still dedicate more than double the amount of time than men performing unpaid domestic and care work (7 hours and 14 minutes in comparison to 3 hours and 25 minutes per day, respectively), which is exacerbated for women with lower education levels and decreases among higher education levels.²²

The disproportionate responsibility of this type of work limits women's opportunities, be it in education, employment, political participation or leisure time, and becomes an obstacle both for economic empowerment and for the enjoyment of their rights on equal terms as men. It is a time tax that women are obligated to pay.

Greater progress requires recognition, reduction and a more equitable redistribution of domestic and care work within households, in addition to fostering co-responsible parenthood, caregiving and providing, whether a marital bond exists or not. However, the development of comprehensive care systems that respond to current and future care needs is a shared responsibility between the state, the private sector and families, which must be reflected in a substantial increase of public services.



1.6 These changes have been experienced unequally by women from different socio-economic, geographic, ethnic and racial groups

Labor participation of women has been increasing, although it has stagnated at 54% over the last four years, with a 20-percentage point gap that has also persisted between men and women (see Graph 2). Additionally, in 2017, the inactivity rate was 25.2% for men and 45% for women at the national level, a trend that does not differ for the remote rural population, with men and women having inactivity rates of 24% and 45%, respectively.²³

The labor situation of women has additional variations according to the income quintile that is analyzed. In 2017, it ranged from 40% in quintile 1 to 64% in quintiles 4 and 5, with a marked gap compared to men, whose labor participation ranged from 66% in quintile 1 to 79% in quintiles 4 and 5. In addition, there were differences of approximately 5 percentage points between the first three quintiles, which varies significantly from the situation for women, whose differences for the first three quintiles were roughly 9 percentage points (see Graph 6).

Women who earn low incomes face the heaviest and earliest burdens of unpaid domestic and care work (more than 7 hours a day), which is one of the main barriers to their employment.

While labor participation has increased, even though it has stagnated in recent years, it is important to note that in 2017 the commercial sectors that had the highest employment rates for women were retail, hotels and restaurants (34%), followed by community, social and personal services (30%). Meanwhile, men's employment was concentrated in the agriculture, livestock, hunting, forestry and fishing sectors (24%); followed by commercial, hotels and res-

taurants (22%) and transportation, storage and communications (12%).²⁴

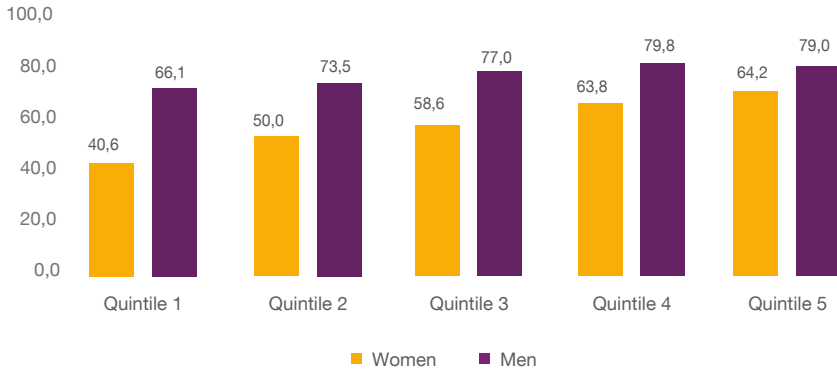
Based on the data in Graph 7, it is also evident that women have faced a more precarious situation with regards to informal employment than men over the last ten years, with the five-percentage point gap between the sexes remaining steady.

The unemployment rate not only shows differences between men and women, but also among women, based on their territory and income level. In 2017, the unemployment rate was 12.3% for women and 7.2% for men (5 percentage points higher). When comparing this figure between cities, there are differences in female unemployment rates. While Quibdó, which has a predominantly Afro-descendant population, had the highest rate of female unemployment in 2017 (20.5%), the lowest female unemployment rate was in Bucaramanga (9.5%), an intermediate city with a recognized manufacturing industry and mestizo population.²⁶

In 2017, women from quintile 1, who are the poorest and least educated, had an unemployment rate of 22.2%, higher than the rate for quintile 5, which was 4.5%. With respect to men, the unemployment rate for those in quintile 1 was 10.3%, more than 11 percentage points lower than the rate for women in the same quintile. This difference does not continue to occur when comparing the unemployment rate of men in quintile 5 (4.3%) with the rate of women in the same quintile (4.5%), as they are very similar (see Graph 8).²⁷

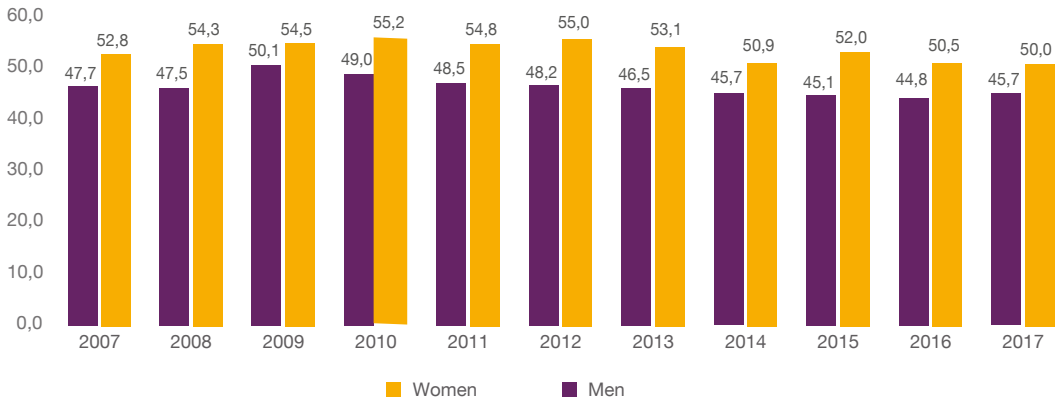
Age is also a determining factor in differences in unemployment rate. Unemployment for young women (14 – 28 years old) was 20.8% in

Graph 6.
Labour participation rate of women and men by income quintile (2017)



Source: DANE - Mayor Integrated Survey of Households, 2017

Graph 7.
Share of informal employment compared to total employment by sex (2007-2017)



Source: DANE - Mayor Integrated Survey of Households, 2007 – 2017²⁵

2017, a considerably high rate when compared with the total rate of women in the same year (12.3%). This figure shows a gap of 8 percentage points compared to the unemployment rate for young men, which was 12.1% (see Graph 9).

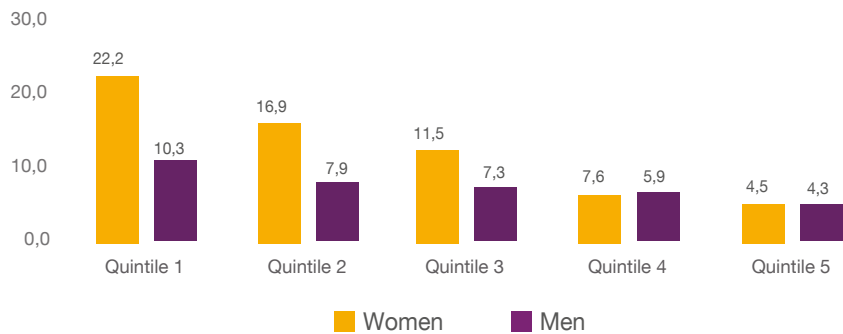
Under this scenario, women study more, participate less in the labor market and also earn less than men, which demonstrates that they face specific barriers for gaining employment.



With respect to socio-economic inequality, one indicator that demonstrates this phenomenon is life expectancy by region. A Colombian girl born in the five-year period 2010 – 2015 has a life expectancy of 78 years. However, if she was born in Bogotá, she will live to be at least 80 years old, but if she is born in Chocó, Casanare or Caquetá, her average life expectancy is 74 years (see Graph 10). This is a difference of six years of life between the two extremes of female life expectancy in Colombia, caused by reasons related to health, the environment, health care, education, etc.; ethically unacceptable and devastating inequalities

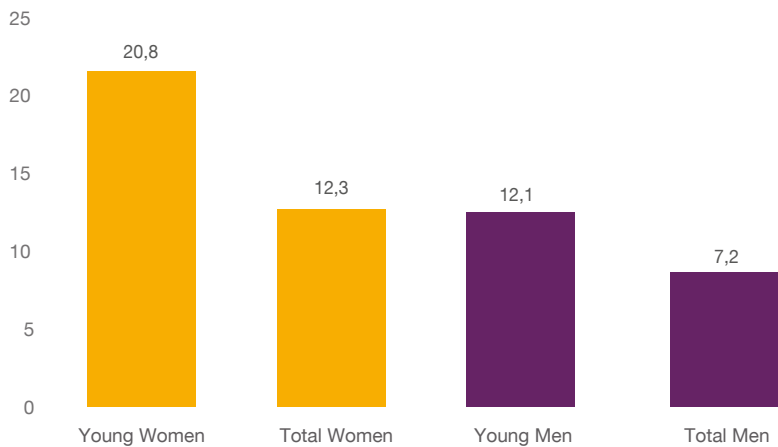
Two groups of women have disproportionately suffered transformations and changes in the realities of Colombia and Latin America. Rural women and women in areas affected by the armed conflict, who as victims have been affected by forced displacement, sexual violence, etc. Colombia has more than 4 million women who are victims of forced displacement.²⁸ A much more recent issue are the nearly 637,000 Venezuelan women who legally entered Colombia in 2017 to seek better opportunities.²⁹

Graph 8.
Unemployment rate of women and men by income quintile (2017)



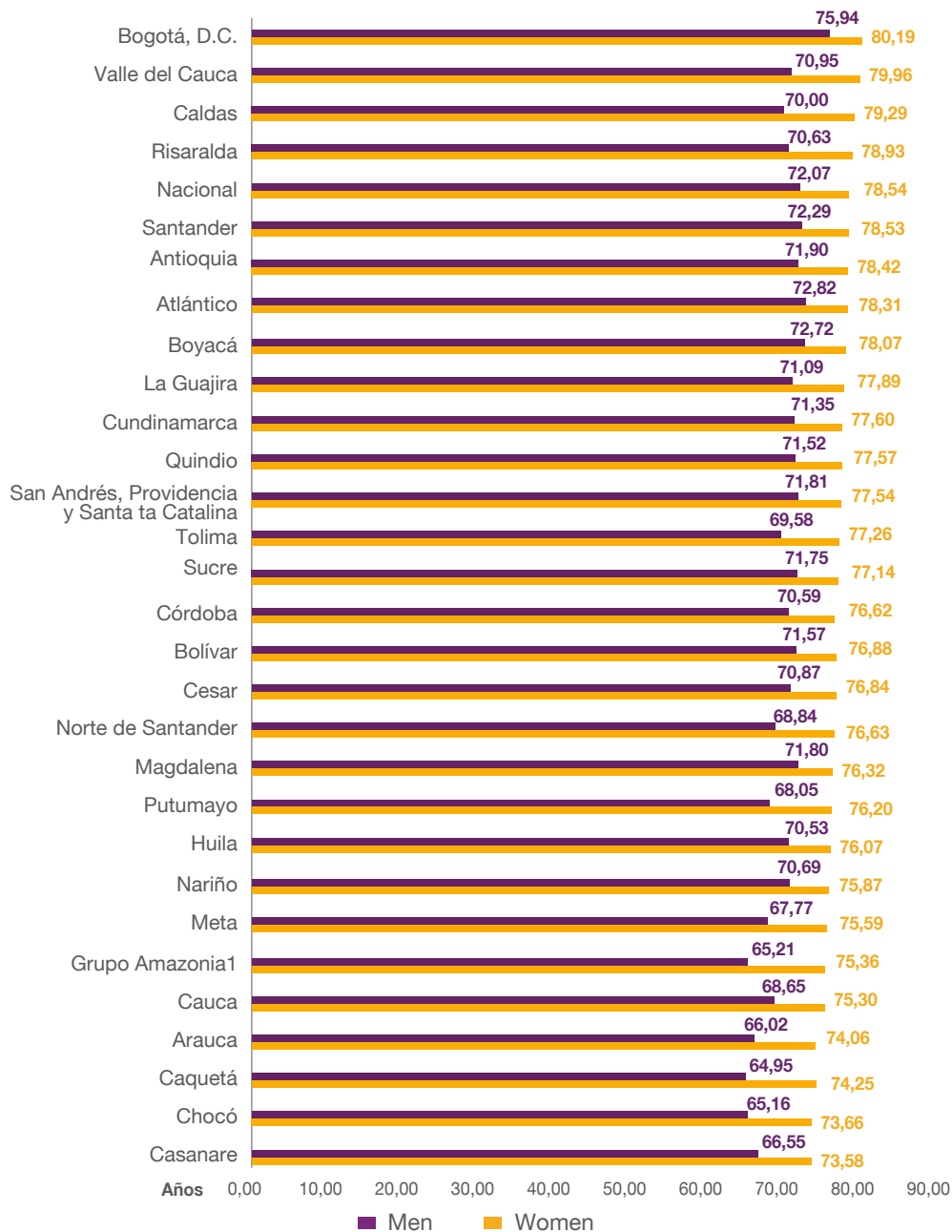
Source: DANE - Integrated Households Survey, 2017

Graph 9.
Youth unemployment rate by sex (2017)



Source: DANE - Mayor Integrated Survey of Households, 2017

Graph 10.
Life expectancy by sex and department (2010 – 2015)



Source: DANE - Population estimates and projections, according to the five-year period 2010-2015



02

Colombian women. An analysis of the different economic empowerment scenarios

2.1 The gaps between women and men involve three types of economic scenarios that women face

The previously described inequalities allow the identification of different groups of women, determined by family-type aspects, including changes in the structure of households and the assignment of roles within them. Social aspects such as market needs, occupational position, level of education or the poverty of women influence the magnitude of the gaps that separate women from men.

The conjugation of these aspects form the background for the economic empowerment of women and allows for the identification of different typologies or scenarios related to the obstacles they have to face in order to achieve economic empowerment. Knowledge of these scenarios depends on the precision of public policies aimed at achieving the autonomy and economic empowerment of women and the elimination of inequalities in relation to men.

To define women in a Latin American context they are characterized by a broad range of inequalities; UN Women works with eight variables grouped into three scenarios³⁰. In the first variable is the labor market and income factors, which is covered by three areas: (I) women's access to their own income, (II) participation in the labor market, and (III) gaps between women and men, both in labor participation and in income. In the second, the factors that account for economic power within families are addressed, namely: (IV) exclusive dedication to household chores, (V) burdens related to unpaid work and (VI) the contributions by women to household income. This last factor is related to family dynamics, considering (VII) the impact of adolescent motherhood and (VIII) female headed households.

However, not all of the variables contem-

plated in the Latin American and Caribbean proposal (UN Women, 2017) are available for the Colombian case. For this reason, we pro-

ceeded to use some variables to approximate the economic empowerment scenarios of Colombian women as described in [Table 1](#).

Table 1.
Variables in the construction of the economic empowerment scenarios of Colombian women, compared to the global classification.

Colombian Report		Latin American Report	Variable used for the cut
Variable	Indicator	Variable	
Female labor participation	Global Participation Rate (%)	Female labor participation (TGP)	Income quintile
Women without their own income*	Percentage of women without their own income (%)	Women without their own income (%)	Income quintile
Women who are exclusively dedicated to household chores	Percentage of women who are exclusively dedicated to household chores (%)	Women exclusively dedicated to household chores (%)	Income quintile
Number of hours of unpaid work per week	Number of hours per week dedicated to unpaid work (hours)	Number of hours per week dedicated to unpaid work (hours)	Level of education
Women between 25 and 29 who are single mothers**	Percentage of births in single women between the ages of 25 and 29	Women between 25 and 29 who are single mothers (%)	Level of education
Women who are mothers at the age of 19***	Percentage of births in women 19 years old or younger	Women who are mothers at 19 years of age (%)	Level of education

* Proportion of the female (male) population aged 15 and over who are not recipients of individual income and who do not study (based on their activity status) in relation to the total female (male) population 15 years and over who do not study.

** Births in women from 25 to 29 years old who do not live with their partner.

*** Births in women 19 years of age or younger.

Based on the analytical structure of the report *Progress of Women in Latin America 2017. Transforming economies to guarantee rights* (UN Women, 2017), and the socioeconomic behavior of the country, three economic empowerment scenarios or typologies have been identified for Colombian women: **sticky floors**, **glass ceilings** and **broken staircases**. From this perspective, women in the **sticky floor** scenario correspond to those in the first income quintile, while those in the top income quintile

account are affected by the **glass ceiling** scenario. Women in the third income quintile are those classified in the **broken staircase** scenario. When the education variable is used, it is assumed that women who have primary education constitute women in the **sticky floors** scenario, those with secondary education are categorized in the **broken staircase** scenario and the **glass ceiling** scenario is assigned to women with higher education qualifications.

2.1.1 Women in sticky floors

Women in *sticky floor* scenarios are those characterized by earlier maternity, less educational and work opportunities and unpaid domestic and care work at the center of their daily activities. The group of women in this scenario face the greatest obstacles to achieving their economic empowerment due to low levels of education (no educational level or with complete or incomplete primary education), low income, lower participation in the labor market (TGP of 40.6%, 14.4 percentage points below the national average for the total of women in 2017) and as a result, a bigger labor participation gap compared to men (26.1 percentage points).

Similarly, there was an average monthly income gap of 47.5% between men and women in 2017, which was well above the national average for that year (17.5%)³¹. Finally, they are women with a greater level of participation in informal and precarious employment (see Graph 7) in domestic work and spend more time dedicated to household chores.

In 2017, 36% of women with complete or incomplete primary education were dedicated exclusively to unpaid domestic and care work. As a result, 36.6% of women in the *sticky floor* scenario lack their own income³², increasing their vulnerability and therefore reducing their ability

to contribute income to the household. Only in one out of every three households belonging to the first quintile is a woman the main income-earner (see Graph 11).

Their situation becomes more critical when one considers that they begin motherhood at younger ages. In 2016, this group was characterized with 43.1% of women who were already mothers aged 19 years old or less and who had only completed primary education or had no educational qualifications at all³³. Specifically, the percentage of births among women aged 19 or less during 2016 was 26.9, which was much higher than the birthrate for women affected by *glass ceilings*.

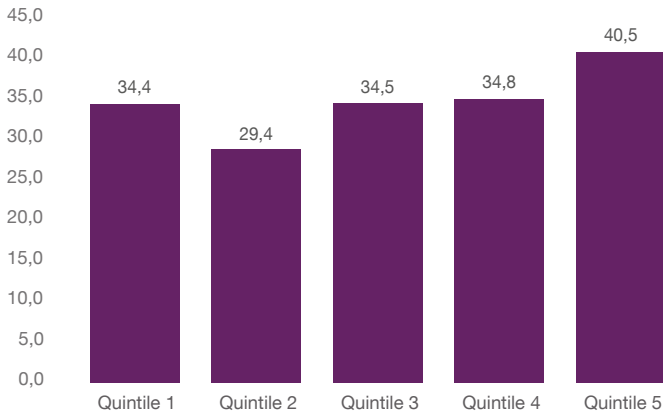
Given the above characteristics, it should be noted that Colombian women in the *sticky floor* scenario are more vulnerable to downward economic cycles and also have a lower potential to be able to take advantage of economic boom periods. They require public policies that initially allow them to mitigate the effects of economic crises and in the long term empower them to take advantage of economic growth.

These policies could provide effective opportunities for access to quality education, including a strong educational component on sexuality and care, in order to reduce teen-

age pregnancy and at the same time reduce their chances of being employed in the informal sector. Public policy focused on access to quality education would also increase opportunities for entering the workplace within the formal sector of the economy, affecting groups

of highly vulnerable women such as those displaced by the armed conflict. This would allow Colombia to move towards the achievement of the fourth Sustainable Development Goal: Quality education.

Graph 11.
Proportion of households where a woman is the main income earner by income quintile (2017)



Source: DANE - Great Integrated Household Survey, 2017



2.1.2 Women facing glass ceilings

Women in glass ceiling scenarios are those with higher education and relatively high income. Among these women, and unlike the group described in the *sticky floor* scenarios, the average monthly income gap between men and women is 16.6%³⁴. The inequality in remuneration among women at high socio-economic levels or among people with the highest educational qualifications does not disappear, it just becomes less pronounced. The differences in income between women and men who have recently graduated from higher education, and in theory are in equal conditions as far as training and experience are concerned, lead to the conclusion that they are affected by the trend of gender discrimination. Between 2008 and 2016, the salary gap between recently graduated women and men fell by 3 percentage points,

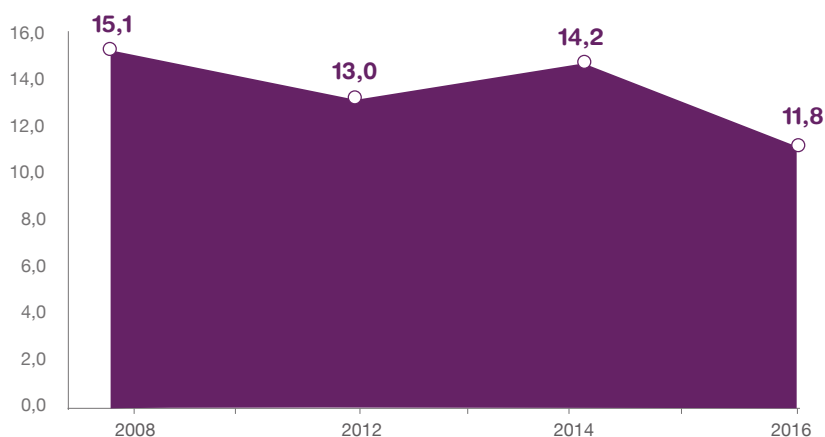
from 15.1% in 2008 to 11.8% in 2016, confirming that in spite of having equal qualifications and experience, women received lower salaries than men. (see Graph 12).

In 2017 there is a gender gap in labor participation for women facing *glass ceilings* (14.8%) that isn't as severe as the *sticky floors* scenario and there is a relatively high rate of labor participation (64.2%) compared to the average for Colombian women in the same year (54.5%).

Consequently, the proportion of women who do not have their own income in this group is reduced to 13.5%, a situation that is also explained by the employment rate: in 2017, six out of every ten working-aged women belonging to this group were employed, compared to three out of ten in the *sticky floor* group.

Graph 12.

Salary gap between women and men who recently graduated from higher education (2008, 2012, 2014, 2016)



Source: Ministry of Education. Labor Observatory for Education (OLE). 2016

Among these women, only 19% were exclusively dedicated to unpaid domestic work and care. In addition to enjoying a better distribution of tasks within the home, the greater availability of income in the *glass ceilings* scenario allows them to access care service offers for household members who require it, such as their children, as well as the elderly or family members with some type of physical limitation or dependency.

Women with higher education spend an average of 6 hours and 57 minutes a day on unpaid care work, which is 21 minutes less than those in the first income quintile. Their decision to postpone motherhood leads to a reduction in the number of children in their homes and therefore they have less of a burden in terms

of time spent on domestic work. The percentage of women with higher education who are aged 19 and under and were mothers in 2016 was 2.6%, well below the percentage among women in *sticky floor* scenarios.

Despite being in a more favorable context, it is necessary to adopt a series of policies aimed at women who are impeded by *glass ceilings* in order to achieve full economic empowerment. The incorporation of quotas for women in public entities, or incentives derived from measures such as the adoption of quality standards for business gender equality in the private sector can be established as mechanisms through which the presence of *glass ceilings* can be eliminated.

2.1.3 Women in broken stairs scenarios

The risk of falling back into the *sticky floors* scenario is high when progress made is insipid or there is a failure to consolidate what has been achieved. In the middle of the two previously described groups is another, conceived of as women in *broken stairs* scenarios, consisting of women who have secondary education or earn a medium income (income quintile 3). Among these women, the risk of dropping down into the *sticky floor* scenario is high, considering that there is an equal level in of these groups in the total number of mothers aged 19 or younger in 2017 (26.9).

It is noteworthy that women in the *broken stairs* scenario have characteristics that tend to resemble those who deal with *glass ceilings*. In 2017, the TGP corresponding to the *broken staircase* group stood at 58.6%, 4 percentage points above the national average for women. The gap in labor participation in relation to men was 18.4 percentage points. The average monthly income gap between men and women was 24.9% in 2017 and 26.5% lacked their

own income. It should be noted that this group registers a double burden since their labor participation is significant, but at the same time, they spend the most time dedicated to unpaid domestic and care work per day (seven hours and 39 minutes on average per day). One out of every five women in the *broken staircase* scenario is fully engaged in unpaid domestic and care work, a significantly lower proportion compared to the group of women in the *sticky floor* scenario.

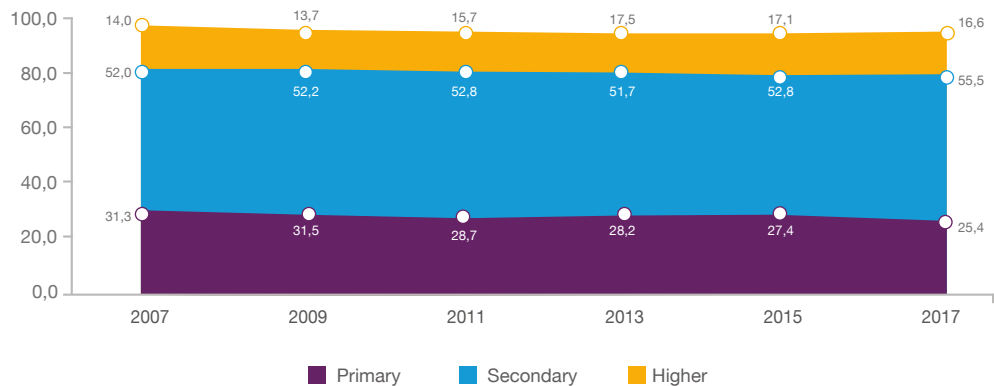
Despite having increased labor participation compared to the group of women in the *sticky floors* scenario, those who are in *broken stairs* scenarios are not very well positioned compared to men in similar conditions. For example, in 2017 the employment rate for women in the third income quintile was slightly more than 19.5 percentage points below the rate for men in the same income group. This condition of vulnerability in the labor market is also evidenced in the number of women working in the informal sector, and the fact that one out of every two

people in the informal sector of the economy has completed their secondary education (see Graph 13), and is practically excluded from the social security system represented in the economic benefits from the contributory health system (maternity leave and disability support), pensions, protection from professional risks and access to family compensation funds. As can be seen in Graph 13, the level of informal employment during the last decade has fallen amongst women with more education, and in particular amongst those with secondary education qualifications, reflecting the situation of women who are employed informally, have

obtained their high school qualification and are categorized in the *broken staircase* scenario.

Consequently, for this group it is necessary to adopt policies that allow them to become economically empowered, gain stability, tilt the balance so that they can have greater access to opportunities similar to what has been achieved by women in the *glass ceilings* scenario. The measures aimed at achieving the transition towards the formalization of precarious employment is the first step in reducing the vulnerability faced by women in the *broken staircase* scenario.

Graph 13.
Participation in informal employment (both sexes) according to educational level (2007-2017)

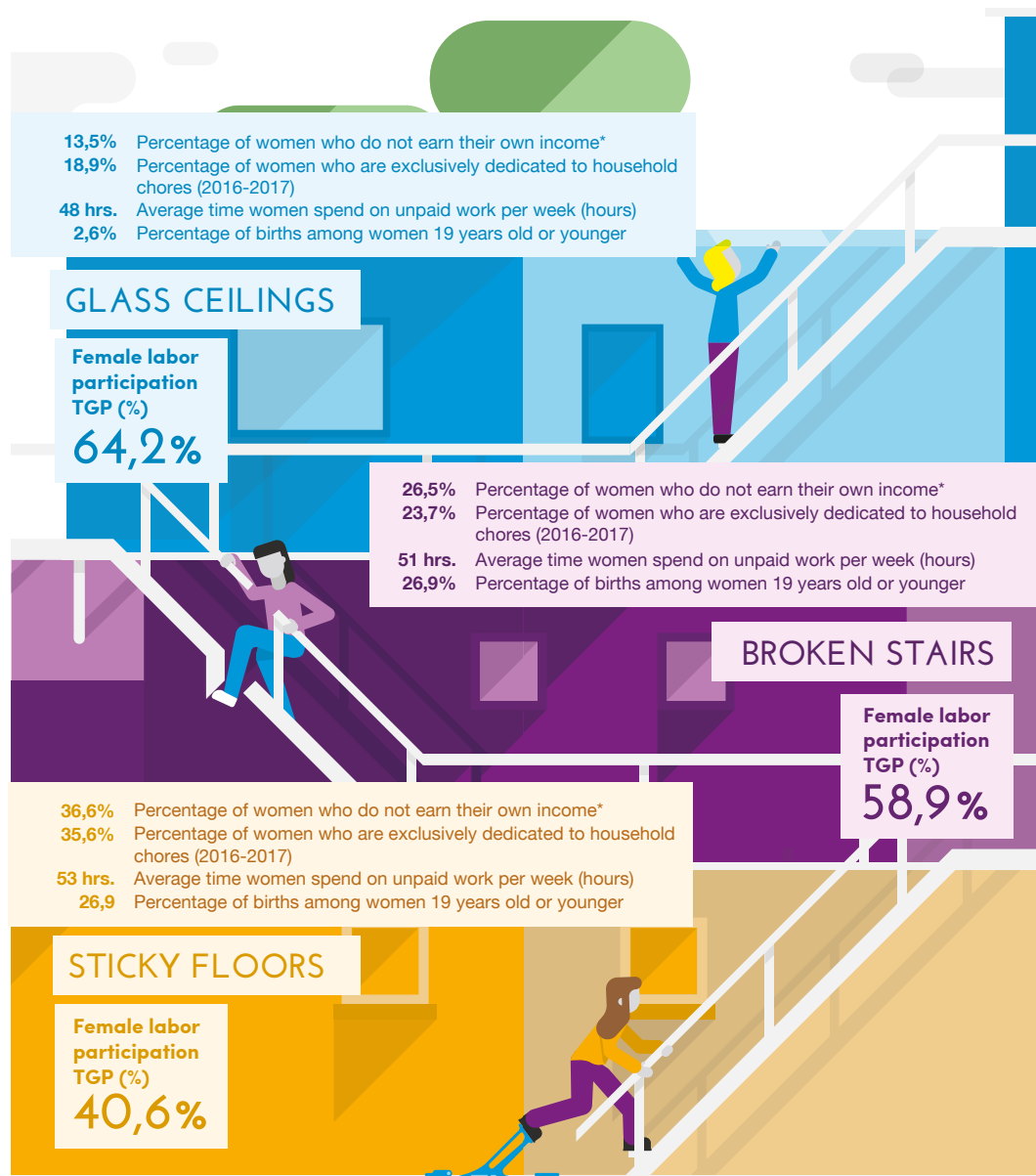


DANE - Integrated Household Survey, 2007 - 2017

Note: The remaining percentage in each year corresponds to people with no education and those who did not report their education level.



Table 2.
Economic empowerment scenarios: Indicators for Colombia, 2017



Source: DANE, calculations based on the Integrated Household Survey -GEIH, 2016 and National Survey on Use of Time-ENUT 2012-2013



03

Recommendations of strategies and public policies for the economic and social empowerment of Colombian Women

Strategy 1. Create more and better jobs, but generate mechanisms to guarantee access for women under conditions of equality

Despite the increase in the labor participation of Colombian women, they are still strongly affected by traditional roles regarding their share of domestic chores, which limits their access to labor market alternatives and relegates them to working in the informal sector. In the last seven years there has been a reduction in the number of women in the informal sector of 6 percentage points, which is less than the reduction in the number of men with informal employment³⁵. Women continue to suffer from low levels of employment and poor remuneration, not just because of the types of informal work they carry out, but also because they have less time to dedicate to this work compared to men.

The differences in income between men and women are reduced when they access occupations belonging to the formal sector in the economy. In the main cities of the country, despite

the fact that the wage gap persists, the gender gap between independent workers concentrated in the informal sector and salaried workers can reach around 30 percentage points.

These differences are explained not just by differences in the salaries they receive, but also by the number of hours they are paid for, since people with formal employment work an average of 4 hours more per week than independent workers³⁶. The informal sector does not represent an alternative for a significant number of women since they are victims of unemployment, which especially affects young women. In this context, continuing the upward trend of women's labor participation, improving their educational and technical qualifications and reducing their work in the informal sector are priorities that require the adoption of the actions detailed below:

Sostener el crecimiento real del salario Sustain the real growth of the minimum wage and promote the creation of formal employment.

Since 1950, Colombia has implemented a minimum wage that mainly applies to the formal sector of the economy, for which it is documented that women don't just work fewer hours, but also receive proportionally less income than men. It should be noted that people who work in the formal sector have equal access to the benefits of the social protection system (health care, old age pension, bonuses, insurance against work accidents and unemployment insurance). For women to access even the minimum wage, the first step is a reduction in informal work, in which they have a higher participation rate than men.

In addition to boosting employment opportunities in the formal economy, policy decisions should consider what determines the decision on the amount of the minimum wage each year; for example, recorded inflation or targets that the Bank of the Republic establishes for this indicator. The need to increase productivity must also be taken into account, especially when considering the weight of the informal economy in the country. Nevertheless, it is necessary to continue with efforts to formalize the economy to ensure that women have the same access as men to an income that is at least the minimum wage.

For women working in labor markets as independent and/or informal workers, measures aimed at the structural development of the national care system will guarantee that women have time to engage in paid work. It is important to note that a large part of the pay gap between men and women originates in the difference in the hours dedicated to work and the economic sector they work in, given cultural stereotypes and the size of the informal economy, in addition to unpaid care responsibilities that are traditionally the responsibility of women.

Take effective measures against employ- ment discrimination.

Despite the progress in closing the average monthly income gap between men and women and the measures aimed at eliminating labor discrimination due to gender, these issues persist, even when male and female candidates have equal education and experience, maintaining the labor hiring biases that are unfavorable to women. Promoting the participation of the workers in collective bargaining spaces would help counteract these biases.

Several companies around the world, particularly large and mixed public state contractors, have chosen to make the salary ranges of their employees public, in order to be more transparent and evidence the conditions of equality that they are working to improve.

Although the country has made progress in the introduction of business certification practices to promote gender equality, public policies should encourage and promote the adoption of quality standards in areas such as recruitment and selection processes, training and coaching, professional development and a balance between paid and personal work and the prevention, management and monitoring of violence and harassment in the workplace.

It should also be noted that the lower participation of women in trade union organizations affects their representation in the management bodies of these organizations, with negative implications for their voices in the workplace and in social dialogue spaces in which labor policy agreements are reached³⁷. Trade unions can and must make women's voices heard, not just making their economic situation viable but also improving their political empowerment.



Strengthen labor inspections with an emphasis on highly feminized precarious employment activities.

Since the ratification of ILO Convention 189 on domestic workers, the Colombian Government has been making progress in formalizing this group of workers, who are generally women, to provide them with better income and access to the comprehensive social security system. Box 3 describes the country's progress in formalizing domestic work. The results, however, are not very encouraging as 4 out of every 5 workers and domestic workers are still informally employed³⁸. To address this situation, it would be helpful to strengthen the role of labor inspectors.

Promote women's access to decision-making positions and the adoption of measures to improve gender equality in the public sector and in companies.

The country has made significant progress in reducing labor inequalities between men and women. As of October 2017, in a total of 1,302 institutions that reported complete information to the Administrative Department of Public Function, 41% of the top management jobs were held by women while in other decision-making positions, female participation was estimated at 45% of total employment³⁹.

In terms of the participation of women in managerial levels of the private sector, there are strong challenges due to the presence of *glass*

ceilings that prevent women from occupying leadership and decision-making positions, despite their experience and training. According to the study by the Corporate Women Directors International, “16.2% of the board positions of the main Colombian companies are occupied by women” (CWDI, 2016).

It also highlights the measures that the private sector has taken to ensure gender equality and women’s rights, which are framed in the guidelines of the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development and are supported and promoted by the United Nations System:

- **Adherence to Principles for the Economic Empowerment of Women (WEPs):** promoted by UN Women and Global Compact Network Colombia. The principles allow companies to link to a global network of more than 1,800 companies, through which they can promote their business initiatives that are committed to the empowerment of women and exchange experiences with actors around the world committed to the WEPs.

With WEPs, companies can apply the “gender gap analysis tool” this online tool allows them to make a diagnosis and an improvement plan in the areas of management, corporate policies, health, safety and violence prevention, education and training, business development, supply chain, marketing practices, leadership and community engagement, transparency and reporting.

These principles offer companies the possibility of aligning CSR policies with the objectives established by the National Public Policy on Gender Equality and the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- **The Gender Equality Seal Certification - EQUIPARES:** led by the Ministry of Labor with the support of the Presidential Council for Equality of Women and the UNDP. The Colombian Government has one of the most complete certification programs for the Gender Equality Management System (SGIG), known as the Gender Equality Seal - EQUIPARES, which aims to distinguish companies that have implemented the SGIG through a certification process that leads to generating cultural transformations for the achievement of gender equality in companies.
- **Application of the Gender Equality Model (MIG SCORE):** created by the ILO to strengthen supply chains aimed at SMEs. The MIG SCORE provides training and technical assistance to implement effective gender equality management practices that improve the working conditions for women and men as well as the productivity of companies.

TEXT BOX 1.

Progressive formalization of domestic workers in Colombia

In Colombia, domestic work, which is specifically concentrated in cities and municipal capitals, contributes to approximately 3% of the total jobs in the country. Informal hiring, which means not receiving social security benefits, dominates in this undervalued and feminized work. To counteract this situation in adopting Convention 189, the country established two Decrees in 2013: 721 and 2616. The first requires employers to enroll and pay for domestic workers to belong to a social security fund and enjoy the benefits that it provides. The second Decree regulates social security contributions for people who work for less than full time.

With the application of Decree 2616 of 2013, domestic workers who were enrolled in the health care system as beneficiaries of a third contributor or through the subsidized regime can now be paid for by their employer to the social security system along with taxes and contributions to a pension fund, enrolled in a social security fund and be covered by workplace insurance. Payments for pensions and family allowance are estimated as weekly contributions while occupational insurance is paid for to cover a period of 30 days.

In July 2016, Law 1788 was passed, granting workers access to a bonus, considered a social benefit payable by the employer to the employee or domestic employee. The payment of 15 days additional pay for each 6 months that is worked. This bonus is accessed independent of whether the contract is internal or external or if the person is paid each day for their work.

Despite the advances in regulations adopted since 2013, the weight of domestic work in informal employment has not reduced significantly. For example, in the 13 main cities in the country and their metropolitan areas, the number of domestic workers who are informally employed has only been reduced by half a percentage point between 2014 and 2017.

Strategy 2. Make progress in the construction of universal social protection systems and develop strategies which extend to social security, particularly gender based strategies

The last few years have been notable for achieving an unprecedented expansion of social protection coverage. This expansion began to take shape in the Constitution of 1991, through which the Colombian state increased its responsibility for providing social services. In five years it doubled the allocation of public spending as part of GDP in the country.

This led to a gradual increase in basic services such as health, which has coverage close to 95%. However, effective access to secondary and higher education persist as a major challenge for the population⁴⁰. It affects almost half of young graduates in the country. The social protection system must continue to be strengthened in order to achieve universal coverage with equality and improvements in the quality of the different services, despite the economic and tax issues that threaten the country.

Likewise, it is essential to improve the gender equality approach to ensure that policies and programs are designed, implemented and evaluated while taking into account the multiple forms of discrimination that women suffer throughout their lives. Social protection is a human right recognized in several of the international instruments of which the country is a signatory. In addition, it is a key component of economic and social development, positively affecting productivity, employability and social inclusion⁴¹. Thus, the increase in coverage and improvement in the quality of these services becomes one of the most urgent priorities for achieving sustained economic growth, with social cohesion and decent work for women

and men alike⁴². Therefore, the report recommends the following, among other measures:

Continue with cash transfer coverage for families with children.

In several countries in the region, an important increase in the number of women with access to their own income has been achieved through this route. Although this is a temporary solution, it can generate progress without losing the gained ground.

Currently, three out of every four women in Colombia have their own income. The main challenge is to move towards systems that provide them adequate amounts of income and universal benefits within a complex fiscal and political economical context (see Strategy 6). Likewise, linking the beneficiaries of these transfers to complementary services: literacy, vocational training, agricultural programs, child care services, legal assistance and assistance for survivors of domestic violence, it is essential to promote the empowerment of the most vulnerable populations and women who fit in these groups.

Empowering women also means ensuring that gender stereotypes are not reinforced and that social transformation processes are achieved. This guarantees active and cooperative parenting, and doesn't just reinforce ideas that prevent women from leaving a vulnerable situation. In this regard, it is important to coordinate efforts that economically empower women through the processes of citizenship construction and citizen co-responsibility, so that in limited timeframes, women do not take

on more care work and can make progress with social and community work in their environments.

Maintain the coverage of cash transfers for the elderly.

The “Elderly Colombia” program has taken significant steps to correct socioeconomic disadvantages experienced by women in their old age. Women have reported increased difficulties when it comes to saving⁴³. With a life dedicated to unpaid care work, an inconsistent work history, a greater tendency to cover family health expenses with the money that they have and a higher likelihood that they work in the informal sector⁴⁴, many elderly women in Colombia have not been able to generate savings or pensions and are completely dependent on support from other family members in their homes.

To help alleviate this complex situation, it is necessary to continue providing grants to this program and complement this strategy with the Adult Welfare Centers and Day Centers (spaces where elderly people in vulnerable conditions are looked after).

By 2013 the program covered 1,250,000 people, a little more than half of the goal of 2,400,000 older adults living in vulnerable con-

ditions, a target established by the Colombian government. Efforts must continue to provide coverage to the population independent of their gender or work history to ensure that inequalities in the labor market are not transferred to income during their adult lives and that older adults are treated in an integrated manner so that they can maintain dignity and an active life-style as they age

Make progress in social security coverage for informal workers.

Given the problem of the prevalence of the informal sector, with 47.8% of the economically active population dedicated to these tasks in the main urban centers⁴⁵ and the consequent lack of risk guarantees, it is necessary for the government to continue to provide assistance and protection, making efforts to link informal workers to the health system, either the contributory or subsidized system. These include occupational risks and risks in the national pension system. Above all, considering that women have a much higher probability of entering this sector of the employment market⁴⁶, they face greater risks to their health and economic stability. This initial foundation will allow them to find better opportunities as progress is made in formalizing labor and guaranteeing fair work.

TEXT BOX 2.

The progressive impact of Families in Action ^{47 48 49}

The More Families in Action program, previously known as Families in Action, was created to counteract the negative effects of the economic crisis that hit the country in the late 1990s. Since 2001, conditional cash transfers have been made to low-income families with children younger than 17 years of age, with the condition that they attend health checks and ensure their children's permanent enrollment in the educational institution, attending more than 80% of classes. Following the provision of cash transfers to the mothers of children, the following results emerged: an increase in household consumption, high and equal school attendance among both boys and girls and improvements in the nutrition and health of infants. The slight increase in the formal employment of women in rural areas and the average reduction in the overall birth rate in these municipalities are elements that contribute to the economic and social empowerment of women in the rural sector. Even so, the More Families in Action program was not based on gender equality goals, which would have an increased impact on women's lives. As several studies show, the responsibility of taking children to school often falls exclusively to mothers. For this reason, More Families in Action must incorporate a gender equality approach within its program to continue contributing benefits to women without creating new burdens of responsibility. It also needs to guarantee a transformative approach to social relations that allows them to emerge from their vulnerable conditions and become a fully active member of society.

Source: DNP (2018)

Strategy 3. Contain the adverse effects of the economic slowdown with respect to gender equality

It has been recognized that since the mandate of the Constitution of 1991, social spending has increased substantially in Colombia, meaning that health care and education coverage have begun to improve. However, a series of different types of inequalities remain: urban-rural, male-female, youth-adult, white-black-mixed race-indigenous, etc. There is major work that still needs to be achieved through social policy. Poverty in rural zones is three times greater than in large cities; female unemployment is 70% higher than male unemployment; and life expectancy in Bogotá is 6 years more than in Chocó. These inequalities are exacerbated during periods of economic slowdowns, which hit some groups harder than others in terms of unemployment, particularly for people who have less protection from fluctuations in international trade and budget cuts, which is why the following actions are required:

Avoid hyper-restrictive monetary policies.

When hyper-restrictive monetary policies are implemented, economic activity is significantly affected, especially for business owners of small and medium companies. Interest rates rise and access to credit becomes more difficult. Given that Colombia essentially controls its inflation, which ranges between 2% – 4% and is set by the Bank of the Republic, there is a need to have a non-restrictive monetary policy that continues to control the usury rate and protect economic activity while facilitating the creation of enterprises and employment that supports women's initiatives

Maintain or allow depreciated exchange rates, which are crucial in maintaining the competitiveness of Colombian exports, many

of which are strongly dependent on female labor, as is the case with the floriculture industry. The risks of the “Dutch Disease” in countries highly dependent on mining and energy exports enjoying periods of prosperity are latent in economies such as in Colombia, and therefore, efforts from the government and central bank are required to maintain competitive exchange rates.

Protect social spending that has positive effects on gender equality and the economic empowerment of women.

The increase of fiscal revenues in the country due to high mining and energy prices during the early years of this decade, and the prioritization of social goals and policies as well as conditional cash transfer programs such as More Families in Action and the Cero a Siempre (Zero to Always) public policies, have had positive impacts on the most vulnerable populations in the country. Both of these programs are investments that contribute to improving women's access to their own income and they should be protected in the current economic slowdown.

There must be a clear and consistent gender-based approach in post-disaster and humanitarian assistance social spending.

In countries such as Colombia which has suffered from an armed conflict that has generated nearly 8 million victims, and a displaced population of which the majority are women and children, reparation policies that have a clear gender-based approach are required. Policies for land restitution, compensation for damages, recovery of goods, etc. must be implemented

by giving prioritized access to women. Moreover, the country is also prone to natural disasters, which disproportionately affect women, and therefore requires differentiated policies to care for this population (see Text Box 6). Specific prevention and care policies must also be designed for women, and during the humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation stage, it must be taken into account that the needs and support required by women are different from those of men, especially in terms of economic empowerment and asset recovery.

Increase available fiscal resources and improve redistributive effects through a new fiscal covenant.

Tax avoidance and evasion must be combated while improving the efficiency and progressiveness of tax collection and avoiding the

regressive effect of indirect taxes on the consumption of basic products and services consumed by women, particularly those in *sticky floor* scenarios, who tend to spend the bulk of their income on these purchases.

Make progress towards redistributive and gender-sensitive public spending to stabilize the demand for goods and services, protect employment, guarantee women's economic security in the short term and create conditions for their economic empowerment in medium and long-term periods with gender-responsive budgets that seek to redirect fiscal and budgetary policies towards achieving better results in terms of gender equality. This entails not just accessing more fiscal resources, but also redirecting current public spending.

TEXT BOX 3.

The effect of the Mocoa disaster on women

On March 31, 2017, 317 people died in Mocoa (Putumayo) as a result of an avalanche caused by a landslide of tons of rocks, mud and forests that buried several neighborhoods in the city. The disaggregated death rate was 1.8 women over 15 years of age for every man the same age, almost double. Why was the death rate for women so high? Cultural practices and power relationships between men and women played a factor, as did the date and time of the event: Friday, March 31st at 11pm. Furthermore, women's ability and strength to escape, the sense of protection they have for their homes, and their responsibility caring for children and sick relatives who could not move, as well as delays in leaving to seek safety all played a role. It is important to note that in disaster prevention and care, as well as in humanitarian activities for the care of victims and social, psychological and economic reconstruction, women need to be prioritized and given special attention. This is not evident even a year after the tragedy.



Strategy 4. Recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid domestic and care work

Domestic and unpaid care work is a structural impediment for the economic empowerment of all women, although the effect may vary depending on their situation: either because it hinders the growth of labor mobility (women in the glass ceiling scenario); because it prevents access to formal and well-paid jobs (*broken staircases*); or because it hinders access to all types of labor income (*sticky floors*).

Considering that, on average, Colombian women devote twice as much time to unpaid care activities as men, this is considered one of the main obstacles that must be addressed immediately. We must recognize, reduce and redistribute domestic work and unpaid care so that it is divided between the family, the state and the market. This is imperative. To match the achievements

To formulate national comprehensive care strategies through participatory processes.

Continue to strengthen quality care services by training staff who are specialized in early childhood (as has already been done). This is essential in reducing the time constraints faced by women, as well as to promote the autonomy, rights and abilities of those who need care and support.

To achieve this, programs that have been piloted by recent governments must be affordable, meet quality standards and be respectful of the rights and dignity of individuals and those who are being cared for. The recent progress made in forming the National Care System (SINACU) must be continued, strengthened and implemented in a strategically prioritized manner.

Improve care systems for early childhood.

Increasing access to affordable and high quality child care services to meet the needs of working mothers and fathers can have important economic and social benefits. These services make it possible to train and educate children, create different types of jobs and reduce the cost involved for women entering the labor market. This requires continuing the construction and adaption of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute's (ICBF) Child Care Centers and the training of its staff. The purpose is to create a stimulating learning environment, coordinating actions with the state, private sector and civil society to guarantee the rights of early childhood. This implies adequate wages and working conditions, including training opportunities.

Challenge the system that creates underpaid care workers, continuing with the certification, formalization and increasing social recognition of care services among different professional associations and employers. This is in accordance with the provisions of Convention 189 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) on labor rights for domestic workers.

Ensure compliance with and defense of maternity and paternity leave or shared parental leave, while progressively advancing to care leave systems that are shared between women and men. This will ensure that mothers and fathers receive the agreed leave, that they are reinstated to their positions without problems and that having a child does not affect their professional career in any way and isn't considered a burden, but instead is socially supported. Additionally, we propose the development of cultural transformation actions for the care roles of men and women.

Invest in basic infrastructure, including drinking water, sanitation, and electricity.

The latter helps reduce domestic work, particularly among women from rural areas where services are limited. Reducing domestic labor means more time for productive, educational and leisure activities. These women and their families have very limited access to services.

On average at a global level, an indigenous woman in rural areas is 300 times less likely to receive skilled assistance during childbirth when compared to an ethnic minority woman

who lives in an urban area⁵⁰. In the push to give people more time for non-work activities, whether it's education or leisure, it is essential to have the required infrastructure and services.

With the private sector sharing responsibility, it is possible that this infrastructure could help by promoting the development of services and care industries in the economy, through incentives, investment promotion and the delivery of care services with support for formalization processes. All of this can help boost the economy.



TEXT BOX 4.

Bases of the National Care System

Law 1753 of 2015 establishes that “the National Government, headed by the DNP, in a coordinated manner with the entities that form the Commission created by Decree 2490 of 2013 and with the support of social organizations, academia and the private sector, will create the institutional, technical and economic bases to develop the National Care System based on the provisions of Law 1413 of 2010, defining a National Agenda on Care Economy “.

The National Care System, within the framework of the Colombian Social Protection System, seeks to articulate and coordinate the institutional response directed at both the people who require care and those who provide care, with an emphasis on people who are dependent. According to the Intersectoral Commission for the inclusion of information on unpaid household work in the National Accounts System (2016), care is defined as “the action or actions that meet the basic needs of people in their daily lives, and during all of the different moments in their life cycle. Care actions guarantee the social and organic survival of people and are constituted by their interactions with the environment and with other people”.

Source: DNP (2018)

Strategy 5. Promotion of equal relationships that recognize the diversity of families

As in other Latin American countries, Colombian families are going through major changes. These changes are due to an increase in the number of female heads of household over the last 20 years and a reduction in nuclear families and extended families resulting in more single-person and single-parent households. Each family situation has its own distinct characteristics. For example, single-parent families can be broad or nuclear. Families without children have increased over the last two decades, more so in the countryside than in urban areas, perhaps as a result of armed conflict. Among non-nuclear families, 2 out of every 3 of these families have a female head of household, while among non-family homes (single or non-nuclear), the rate of female heads of household is reduced to 40%⁵¹.

Likewise, other forms of family arrangements have emerged involving a heterosexual couples and their children or two-parent families consisting of same-sex couples. In a context marked by the heterogeneity of Colombian families, it's important to recognize the existence of different families, but with an understanding that this results in different needs in terms of education, health or housing. This is also reflected in different policies⁵². Given these circumstances, certain measures could be considered:

To fill the legal vacuum derived from the recognition that a family can consist of same-sex couples.

All the advances related to the recognition of the rights of same-sex couples have come from rulings by the Constitutional Court: de facto marital union (2007), pension (2008), right to

constitute a family (2011), adoption (2015) and equal marriage rights (2016). In this context, the Congress of the Republic could adopt a more active role that would provide a legislative framework to guarantee equal rights for same-sex couples.

Greater coverage of care services and social protection, as a way of addressing the workloads within families for members who would benefit from the provision of care services, as this would reduce workloads within the family home (See Strategies 1 and 2).

Make progress in maternity, paternity and family leave

Since 2002, the country took its first steps so that fathers enjoy paid paternity leave for 8 working days, during which time they share the new born child with their partner. However, this progress must be accompanied by actions that generate cultural changes in order to create awareness of the responsibilities of men and women in the upbringing of their children. These actions must be permanent, since they involve generating cultural change (See Strategy 1). It is necessary to progress toward child care leave systems, which are shared between women and men, promoting a culture of co-responsibility that allows parenting to be assumed freely and shared by both fathers and mothers.

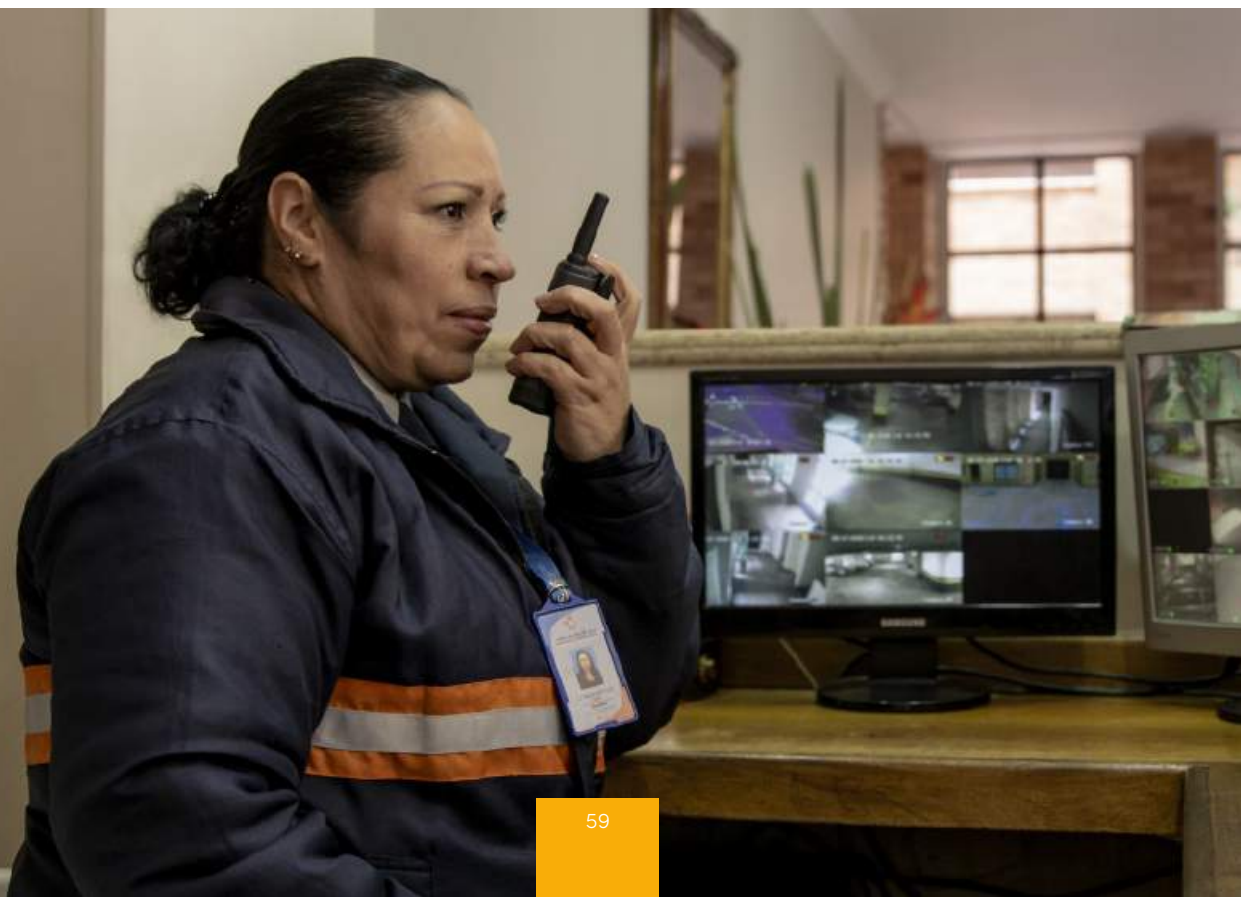
Develop solid mechanisms that guarantee responsible paternity, including the payment of alimony.

The burden of single-parent homes headed by women is more complex when the father or the

parents of their children do not share the expense of raising their children. With regard to child support, the law withholds up to 50% of the parent's salary and the judge can set a food allowance of up to 50%, depending on the circumstances of each case, i.e.- the existence of children from other relationships. The justice system has to manage around 100,000 complaints a year for non-payment of child support due to the demand for food non-attendance, with a current proposal to remove this process from the courts system. As an alternative, it has been proposed to review the adoption of incentives that encourage people who are in arrears with child support payments to catch up and to maintain a record of people responsible for paying child support and sharing this with employers.

Implement integrated responses that would help prevent and eliminate violence against women committed by their partners and spouses.

In cases of aggression among couples in the country, according to the results of the ENDS (2015)⁵³ only 2 out of 10 women report being victims of violent incidents and in very few cases do they ask for help. When it comes to physical violence, women are the most affected; one in three women have been beaten by their current or former partner, a situation that increases among those who are older and women with less education. One in three women have been a victim of economic or patrimonial violence by their partner⁵⁴. It is therefore essential that the government's regulations intensify or reinforce the measures that are being adopted (described in Box 5).



TEXT BOX 5.

Measures to reduce gender-based violence in Colombia

In Colombia, violence against women due to gender, which means violence directed against women because they are women or that affects women disproportionately, is suffered by both adult women and girls and is aggravated by factors such as age, class, ethnicity, rurality, disability and sexual orientation, among others.

To counteract these issues, some steps have been taken in terms of prevention, care, protection and punishment, as reflected in the adoption of different laws, including: (i) Law 1257 of 2008, defines violence against women in terms of four types of damage: physical, psychological, economic and patrimonial and sexual (including harassment). (ii) Law 1719 of 2014, establishes measures to guarantee access to justice for victims of sexual violence, especially sexual violence involving armed conflict. (iii) Law 1761 of 2015 defines femicide while (iv) Law 1773 of 2016 covers acid attack victims, which classifies this behavior as an autonomous offense, increases sanctions against aggressors and eliminates benefits for perpetrators, such as the conditional suspension of the sentence.

This highlights the importance of promoting cultural transformation processes that contribute to the eradication of the social and institutional tolerance of violence against women.

In Colombia, progress has been made in the provision of information and public detection of cases such as the 155 Hotline for the provision of guidance to female victims of violence, protocols for assessing risk for females by the Family Commissions and the INMLYCF, strengthening the SIVIGE integrated information system and providing training to officials.

However, there is a gap in the application of legislation to make progress in the formulation of comprehensive public policies that recognize and address the main crimes that disproportionately affect women and eliminate the barriers that women face in their search for the right to justice.

Strategy 6. Create conditions for women's effective enjoyment of their sexual and reproductive health and rights with maternity as an option

Women's right "to freely and responsibly decide the number of their children and the time between births, and have access to information, education and the means to exercise these rights"⁵⁵, continues to be an unkept promise for the majority of women in Latin America and the Caribbean. The high percentage of unwanted pregnancies, the persistence of teenage motherhood, the unmet demand for family planning options and restrictions on the legal termination of pregnancy are some of the pending gender equality tasks that have an impact on the risks and opportunities for women in different economic empowerment scenarios.

In Colombia, women from the wealthiest quintile have an average of 1.3 children. The majority of women in a *sticky floor* scenario enter motherhood at an early age and not always with a desired pregnancy. Women with less education have an average of 3.9 children⁵⁶. In both cases, their education, work and family aspirations are undermined due to the permanence of patriarchal relationships and models. Women in the glass ceiling scenario could be restricting their fertility to enter a labor market that continues to operate on the basis of an ideal worker, who doesn't have any family responsibilities and their employer looks down on the idea of maternity for women in decision-making positions. In contrast, women in the *sticky floor* scenario have difficulties in accessing contraceptives and negotiating power relationships to use birth control, which ends up undermining their education and labor projects. For their part, strengthening student retention policies for women so they complete at least lower high school pays off not just in terms of

human capital, but also in terms of fertility, as it reduces teenage motherhood and increases planned pregnancies.

Two populations require special attention for the guaranteeing of their sexual and reproductive rights: displaced adolescent women, who have high pregnancy rates and need support for their situation; and Venezuelan refugees and migrants who, due to the situation in their country, have come to Colombia to safely exercise their right to motherhood and need maternal care.

Creating conditions so that all women can effectively enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights and closing the gap in *sticky floor* scenarios requires a range of measures, including the following:

Improving and equalizing access to modern contraception in general, and especially in rural areas, incorporating new contraceptive techniques (reversible and long-term) and optimizing their availability at primary-care health centers. Emergency contraception is particularly important for women in *sticky floor* scenarios and adolescent women who do not always have access to effective and essential contraceptive methods and for women who are more exposed to forced sexual relationships.⁵⁷

Preventing teenage pregnancy through free, timely and informed access to voluntary, confidential and quality family planning methods.

Universalizing sexual education with a gender and rights-based perspective that enables adolescents to negotiate equitable sex-

ual relationships and effective contraceptive methods with their sexual partners.

Recognizing and attending to the health consequences of unsafe abortions, understood as a public health problem when taking into account that approximately 70 women die per year in Colombia as a result of undergoing pregnancy termination processes without proper medical supervision.⁵⁸ Therefore, where abortion is legal, services must be safe and accessible for all women, without discrim-

ination. In each case, women should have access to quality services to treat complications that arise from abortion.

Eliminating gaps that hinder pregnant or adolescent mothers from continuing their education, by adopting a variety of measures that range from the legal prohibition of their discrimination in school settings to specific programs that break down economic and social barriers (see Text Box 6).

TEXT BOX 6.

A decrease in teenage pregnancy in Bogotá

Teenage pregnancy is a defined poverty trap as it is very difficult for pregnant and adolescent mothers to complete their secondary education and begin preparing for their professional lives, especially if they are in a *sticky floor* scenario. In Colombia, 9 out of 10 pregnant adolescents do not continue their education. As they do not complete their education, they enter the labor market in unfavorable conditions and can only access precarious and low-paying work. An interesting development occurred in Bogotá, in which the number of teenage pregnancies fell from 13,762 to 11,908 from 2016 to 2017. Despite this achievement, there is still a very high rate of 13.4%, compared to the national rate of 17.4%.

Teenage pregnancy is multi-causal: poverty, social inequality, exclusion, mistreatment and domestic violence, expectations of marriage and a better life, abuse and sexual violence, dysfunctional families, a lack of sexual and reproductive education, etc. Subsequently, the response must be multi-institutional, through families, formal and informal educational institutions and society. Sexual and reproductive education must be strengthened at school and in the home, and the state must facilitate access to modern family planning methods and develop legislation that protects children and adolescents.





footnotes

1. General Assembly of the United Nations -2015. Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A/RES/70/1.
2. Including Women's Advisory Offices (3), High Level Women's Directorates (3) and Women's Units (1).
3. (National Planning Department, 2018)
4. (National Planning Department, 2018)
5. Ministry of National Education, National System of Information of Higher Education - SNIES.
6. (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016)
7. (Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social, 2018).
8. UN Women, "Progress of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean", 2017. Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights", page 4. Link: <http://lac.unwomen.org/es/digiteca/publicaciones/2016/12/el-progreso-de-las-mujeres-america-latina-y-el-caribe-2017>
9. (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística - DANE, 2017).
10. According to the report on the Progress of Women in Latin America, the difference in OPR between women and men in Colombia is less than the estimated average for Latin America, which is 26 percentage points.
11. DANE (National Accounts, 2008-2017). For the period mentioned, female OPR elasticity was 1.95 and male OPR elasticity was 0.9.
12. (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística - DANE, 2017).
13. Activities not listed in the National Accounts System include: the provision of food to household members; clothing maintenance for household members; household cleaning, maintenance and repairs; household purchases and administration; caring for household members younger than five years old; physical care of household members, supporting household members; volunteering; passive care (being aware); and sharing tasks. (DANE, 2018)
14. DANE (ENUT, 2016-2017)
15. DANE (ENUT, 2012-2013)
16. (Ibáñez, 2008).
17. (Profamilia, 2016).
18. (DANE, GEIH, 2017).
19. (DNP, 2016)

20. Family typology as proposed by the National Planning Department and the Family Policy Observatory, based on Ullmann, Maldonado Valera and Rico (2014): 1) Nuclear family: consisting of a father and mother, with or without children; or a father or a mother with children. 2) Extended family: consisting of a nuclear household with other relatives or non-relatives, which can include: a) Extensive families: consisting of a nuclear household with other relatives; b) Integrated: consisting of a nuclear household (with or without other relatives) and other non-relatives; c) Non-nuclear families: there is no primary marital nucleus or father/mother-child relationship, but there are other first or second-degree kinship relationships (e.g., siblings). 3) Non-nuclear families; there is no primary marital nucleus or father/mother-child relationship, but there are other first or second-degree kinship relationships (e.g., siblings). 4) Non-family household, which can include: a) Single-person: consisting of one person; b) Non-family, non-nuclear: consisting of households in which there is no marital nucleus nor father/mother-child relationship or sibling relationship, nor are there any other kinship relationships (e.g., students sharing housing and expenses).
21. (Profamilia, 2016).
22. (DANE (ENUT, 2016-2017).
23. DANE Integrated Households Survey – 2017.
24. DANE (GEIH, 2017).
25. The informality module was applied in a periodic manner through GEIH beginning in 2006, based on a sample covering 24 cities and metropolitan areas.
26. (DANE, GEIH, 2017).
27. (DANE, 2016).
28. (Victims Unit, 2018)
29. Number of women with a border transit card (TMF), Colombia Migration Office - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Migration X-ray” Report: Colombia-Venezuela 2017”, undated, page 3. <http://www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/index.php/es/prensa/multimedia/6308-radiografia-de-venezolanos-en-colombia-31-12-2017>
30. UN Women, “Progress of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean 2017: Transforming economies to guarantee rights Derechos”, 2017.
31. (DANE, GEIH, 2017).
32. This group of women does not receive income or study.
33. (DANE, 2016).

34. It is important to note that for the 2017 period there was a wage gap of 16.6% for women in glass ceilings, which was very close to the national average (17.5%), a situation that is explained by the fact that the sample used for the estimation includes two women who are engaged in household chores in quintile 5, a situation that although not widespread, does occur in the country. The first income quintile, used to describe women in the sticky floor scenario, tends to include women who work in the informal sector.
35. (DANE, GEIH, 2017).
36. (Tenjo & Bernat, 2018).
37. (Pungiluppi, Castro, & Muñoz-Boudet, 2010).
38. (Profamilia, 2016).
39. (Función Pública, 2017).
40. Ministry of Health, 2016.
41. (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; International Labor Organisation, 2015).
42. (Consultation Group on Social Protection, 2011).
43. (Saldarriaga Concha Foundation & Fedesarrollo, 2015)
44. (Tenjo & Bernat, 2018).
45. (DANE , 2018).
46. (Galvis, 2012).
47. (Llano, 2014).
48. (Departamento para la Prosperidad Social, 2018).
49. (Rodríguez, 2011).
50. (UN Women, 2018).
51. (National Planning Department, 2015)
52. (National Planning Department, 2018)
53. (Profamilia, 2016).
54. (Profamilia, 2016).
55. (ONU, 1979)
56. (Profamilia, 2016).
57. (UNFPA, 2018)
58. (Prada, Singh, Remez, & Villareal, 2011).

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