



# STRATEGIC NOTE OF THE REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN 2019-2021

 **UN  
WOMEN**   
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women



## **@UNWOMEN 2019**

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# REGIONAL CONTEXT

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean present varying situations of economic, environmental and social vulnerability, both between and within countries. Most are categorized as middle-income countries (MICs), which have played a leading role in the global advancement towards the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and remain crucial in the global efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

LAC countries have made significant commitments to women's rights. All have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and 14 have ratified the convention's Optional Protocol. The Inter-American human rights system includes a powerful regional instrument to combat violence against women, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication Of Violence Against Women "Belém do Pará Convention". In addition, a number of countries have acted to advance gender equality by modifying constitutions, creating women's affairs ministries, institutes and local gender machineries, reforming civil codes, penalizing gender-based violence and enacting gender-based quotas and parity for political offices.

Gains notwithstanding, LAC is a region characterized by high levels of violence against women and girls. According to ECLAC, on average, at least 12 women are killed daily in the region because they are women<sup>1</sup>. Violence against women is mainly a product of patriarchal social and cultural norms, that tolerate violence and reproduce it from generation to generation. Intimate partner violence against women is widespread and femicide rates are among the highest worldwide. Violence coming from criminal networks or linked to migration security issues (e.g. border areas between Venezuela and its neighbors), and post-crisis situations add up to increase women's vulnerability to violence.

1ECLAC Gender Observatory (2017)

Women have gained unprecedented access to economic resources and autonomy in the last 25 years in the region,<sup>2</sup> but cultural attitudes and norms related to traditional gender roles and stereotypes persist, challenging women's rights.

In the last few years, citizens in the region have lost confidence in political parties; in 2017 only 15% of the population believed in them. Many democracies face important challenges, elected representatives are discredited, and 47% of the population considers most to be corrupt.<sup>3</sup> This leads to low levels of confidence in democracy and its capacity to operate for the common good. The justice system and electoral bodies are perceived with similar levels of distrust (25% and 29% confidence, respectively). One of the major new challenges is political violence against women, whether during elections or in office.

Related to the continued expansion and protection of women's rights in the region over the last decades, well-orchestrated ultra-conservative and fundamentalist movements have progressively gained strength in the region, accessing State institutions and influencing legislation and policies. These movements have become the greatest risk of a violent reaction against women's human rights in LAC.

Attacks on and threats to human rights defenders, particularly those from indigenous communities, continue to be of concern. Of the 312 human rights defenders murdered across the world in 2017, 212 (68%) were from Latin America, according to a report published by Ireland-based non-profit Front Line Defenders.<sup>4</sup>

In this context, continued efforts are required

2 ECLAC (2015). Inclusive social development: The next generation of policies for overcoming poverty and reducing inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean. ECLAC Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Lima, Peru from 2 to 4 November 2015.

3 Transparency internacional: <https://bit.ly/2y4CZF2>.

4 Front Line Defenders (2018). Annual Report on Human Rights Defenders at Risk in 2017.

to improve women's political participation and governance systems, advance economic empowerment, scale up engagement to prevent violence against women and girls, promote a gender perspective in the development of a regional notion of security and in humanitarian

action, and eliminate forms of discrimination that directly affect Afrodescendent, indigenous and rural women to ensure that no woman is left behind.

[Table: Snapshot on Gender Inequalities in the Region<sup>5</sup>](#)

<b>PEOPLE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 40% of teenage girls (age 15-19 years) have experienced violence by their partners</li> <li>· 1.1 million girls (age 15-19 years) have experienced sexual violence or some kind of forced act</li> <li>· 50% of the first adolescent sexual experiences have been neither voluntary nor consensual in the Caribbean</li> <li>· 21% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of a partner in the last 12 months</li> <li>· Nearly one in four girls across Latin America are married off before the age of 18 with Latin America and the Caribbean being the only region of the world where child marriage is not on the decline</li> <li>· Second highest rate of adolescent pregnancies, 20% of live births are to adolescent mothers</li> </ul>
<b>PLANET</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Women represent less than 12% of the benefited population in agrarian reform processes</li> <li>· The percentage of women in charge of an agricultural farm ranges from 8% in Belize and Guatemala to no more than 30% in Chile, Jamaica and Saint Lucia</li> <li>· In the region, it is estimated that there are 8.4 million people living in the path of a hurricane and 29 million living in flood zones. Women, particularly those living in poverty, are disproportionately affected by disasters and have different and unequal levels of resilience</li> </ul>
<b>PEACE AND GOVERNANCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Six out of 10 migrant women are raped on their way to the US</li> <li>· 14 of the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicide are in LAC</li> <li>· 29.5% of female representatives in local legislative bodies<sup>6</sup></li> <li>· Average of 30.7% of women parliamentarians<sup>7</sup></li> <li>· 13 LAC countries have less than 20% women parliamentarians<sup>8</sup></li> <li>· Only 14.6% of mayors are women in LAC<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>

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5 Unless otherwise indicated in the table, figures are taken from the publication Commitments and roadmap for a planet 50-50 by 2030, UNSDG LAC, 2017.

6 Figures are coming from the Quadrennial report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, 2019

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7 Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Women, 2018

8 As of January 2019

9 Idem as 6

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**PROSPERITY<sup>10</sup>**

- In Latin America, the femininity index of poverty remained stable and high between 2012 and 2017, at around 113. The femininity index of poverty reflects the percentage of women aged 20–59 years living in poverty compared with the proportion of men living in poverty in the same age group, adjusted by population structure
- The regional average of women with no income of their own reached 29.4%, while for men it was 10.7% in 2017
- Female labor participation averaged 50.2% in the third quarter of 2017, compared with a male participation rate of 74.4%
- In 2015, 11% of employed women in Latin America and the Caribbean worked in domestic service, and of this group, only 26.9% had social security coverage, which meant that the rest did not have adequate working conditions that guaranteed formal employment and regulated working hours
- The average hourly wages of men are higher than those of women. The greatest difference is found among service workers, with women having hourly wages 19.8% lower than men's —this being precisely the occupation that accounts for the largest proportion of women in the labour market
- Average unemployment rates in Latin America and the Caribbean are 10.4% for women and 7.6% for men, so that the gap between the two is still over 2.8 percentage points
- Time-use surveys from 18 countries of the region show that women spend between one fifth and one third of their time on unpaid domestic and care work, compared with about 10% for men
- In the five countries of the region for which information is available —Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala and the Plurinational State of Bolivia—, although, on average, the percentage of young people who are neither in education or employment fell between 2002 and 2014, this decrease was not homogeneous across the different population groups: women and Afrodescendants were in the most disadvantaged situation. On average between these five countries, 34% of Afrodescendent women do not work or study

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**PARTNERSHIPS**

- Only 5% of foreign aid funds were allocated to gender equality as the main objective in the period 2012-2013
- In 2014, only 1% of all funding in fragile states went to women's groups or women's ministries
- National women's machineries are the governing bodies for the coordination of government policies for the mainstreaming of gender equality, of which 58% in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean are Ministries or mechanisms with ministerial rank
  - Only 23% of the data needed to monitor gender-specific indicators is recent, that is, from 2010 or later. And only 16% of that data is available for two or more specific moments, in order to monitor trends<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Figures are coming from the Quadrennial report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, 2019

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<sup>11</sup> Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Women, 2018



# PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

The following strategies have been established in six priority areas to continue to advance GEEW in the region:

## **PRIORITY 1: GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

- Parity
- Leadership
- Gender-responsive governance
- Access to justice

### **Strategies:**

- Expand the vision and application of parity to all dimensions of the State to ensure inclusion of women in all decision-making positions, with special focus on the electoral processes in LAC

- Invest and expand women's leadership across thematic areas: as candidates, civil servants, peace negotiators, mediators and community leaders in crisis response

- Promote the legal recognition and elimination of political violence against women

- Accompany the development, monitoring and evaluation of gender-sensitive plans, policies and budgets at national and local levels, as well as the production of sex-disaggregated data and statistics

- Increase the access and availability of justice services for women



## **PRIORITY 2: PEACE, SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION**

- Security
- Migration
- Crisis preparedness and response

### **Strategies:**

- Expand the implementation of the sustaining peace agenda in the region, fostering women's inclusion in peacebuilding and decision-making to address increasing security challenges and new forms of criminality; and to contribute to the implementation of the peace agenda and transitional justice processes
- Leverage participation in regional coordination mechanisms to expand UN Women programmatic actions in response to the increasing mixed flows of migrants and refugees and risk of trafficking
- Regional preparation of the 20th Anniversary of UNSC Res 1325 and the WPS focal points network

## **PRIORITY 3: ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (EVAW)**

- Femicide/Feminicide
- Prevention and response

### **Strategies:**

- Promote the adaptation and/or implementation of the Model Law on Femicide and the Latin American Model Protocol for the investigation of Femicide in the five countries where the Spotlight Initiative is implemented and beyond
- Strengthen women's civil society organizations, especially those with women facing multiple discrimination to influence laws and policies on EVAW and femicide/feminicide
- Scale up interventions on safe cities, violence prevention with youth and sports, prevalence surveys and elimination of child marriage and early unions

## **PRIORITY 4: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

- Care services
- Equal pay
- Financial inclusion

### **Strategies:**

- Enhance policies and legal frameworks to promote decent work, social protection and recognition, redistribution and reduction of unpaid care work, which includes specific areas of work: Care economy and unpaid care work, decent work for women, including domestic workers' rights, equal pay for work of equal value and gender-responsive social protection systems
- Increase women's access to assets, productive and financial resources, comprising the specific areas of work of: Women's entrepreneurship, Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and gender equality in the private sector, innovative financing and gender lens impact investment and rural women and women farmers' access to land and productive resources

## **PRIORITY 5: CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES**

- Leaving no woman and girl behind
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation and environmental protection

### **Strategies:**

- Intersectionality: increased focus on rural, indigenous and Afro-descendent women, women migrants and refugees, women with disabilities, and LGBT women in country programmes
- Scale up engagement with UN agencies and governments on climate change adaptation and mitigation policies, disaster risk reduction and environmental protection

## **PRIORITY 6: NORMATIVE AND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ENGAGEMENT**

- Ensure that the voices of women and girls are heard, so that they can influence the process of shaping global norms, formulating policies, repealing discriminatory laws and delivering public services

### **Strategies:**

- Support Governments and civil society on CEDAW reporting, the preparation of the CSW sessions and the Beijing+25 review process and the follow-up to CSW agreed conclusions and Beijing+25



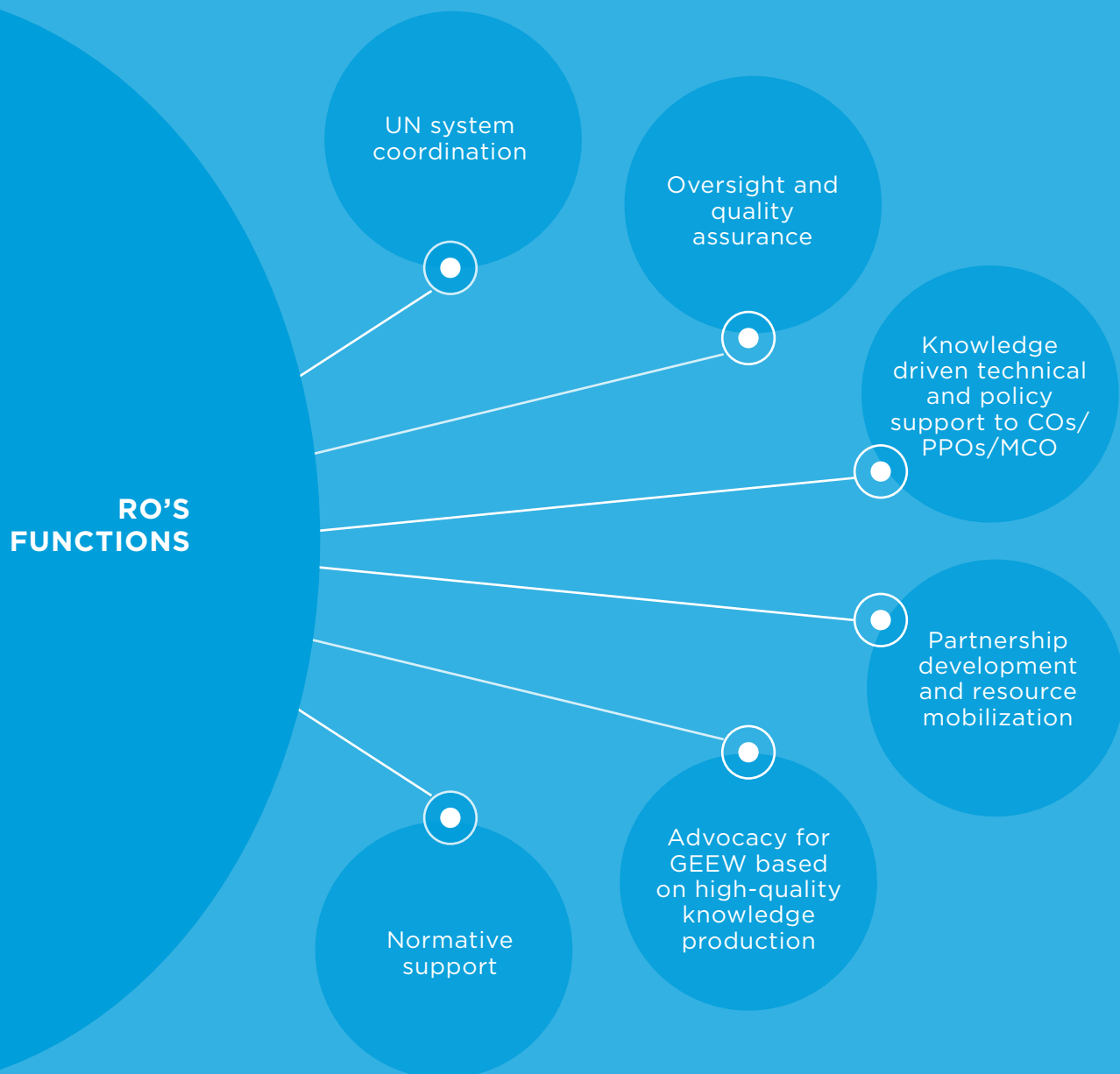
- Support Governments and civil society on the monitoring and reporting on the UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, the twin resolutions of the UN Security Council and General Assembly on sustaining peace, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, including SDG 5 and gender-sensitive targets in the other SDGs
- Strengthen partnerships to counter the ultra-conservative and fundamentalist movements against gender equality that have arisen in the region
- Mainstream the priorities of left-behind groups, such as indigenous and Afrodescendent women into programming, coordination and normative processes at national and regional level
- Support civil society women's organizations capacity strengthening, advocacy and monitoring of State commitments on gender equality and women's rights



# ACRO'S KEY FUNCTIONS & COLLABORATIVE ADVANTAGE

As a thought partner and knowledge hub on GEEW, the Regional Office provides policy advice and programme support to facilitate

effective implementation of the UN Women Global Strategic Plan 2018-2021 in the LAC region.









The nature of cooperation in LAC requires a differentiated and cutting-edge position of UNW. UNW's production of high-quality knowledge products and innovative analysis on structural barriers to gender equality have been very much valued by partners in the region. It has enabled UNW to strengthen its credibility, reputation and presence in the region.

Examples of new concepts and models promoted by UNW include:

1. Regulatory framework to consolidate parity democracy with Parlatino
2. Regional model law on femicide/feminicide with OAS/CIM
3. Progress Report of Women in LAC
4. Global Centre of Excellence on Gender Statistics (CEGS) and convening of annual international conferences on gender statistics and use of time in Aguascalientes with the Government of Mexico
5. Regional preparatory consultations and follow up to the CSW
6. Reporting on CEDAW
7. Monitoring of 1325 Resolution implementation and reporting
8. Coordination of the inter-agency groups on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and the SG UNITE Campaign
9. Girls' empowerment through sports/one woman leads to another
10. Regional joint programmes: Mechanism for the Acceleration of the Political Participation of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, with UN Women, UNDP and IDEA International

11. Win-Win: Gender equality means good business with UN Women and ILO financed by the European Union; Ending child marriage and early unions in LAC with UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women; Spotlight project with UN Women, UNFPA and UNDP financed by the European Union

In 2018, ACRO undertook a comprehensive review of the knowledge products generated by offices and the programmes that the organization has been implementing in the region to define the programmatic offers in women's economic empowerment, elimination of violence against women, political participation and governance and women and the urban agenda. A similar analysis is being carried out for the area of women, peace and security and humanitarian action.

Across these areas, and in addition to UNW's corporate flagship programmes, UNW has 20 full-fledged programmatic offers. These programmatic offers include various components: i) they have proven impact on some of the SDG indicators; ii) they were designed and implemented in various countries; iii) they have been costed according to country specificities. They reflect accumulated expert knowledge and solid partnerships and are all aligned with UNW Strategic Plan Outputs. In addition, ACRO has mapped more than 20 strategic programmatic offers that are missing one of the three components described above but have the potential to become full-fledged programmatic offers by 2021.

Based on this, UNW can establish packages of programmatic offers and multi-year partnerships funded by State institutions, donors, the private sector, etc. All the programmatic offers and knowledge products that were mapped for the action model are available in the LAC internal knowledge management platform.



# PARTNERSHIPS & SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

The transformative vision of the sustainable development agenda adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015 places new demands on the scale, scope and ambition of UN Women's strategic partnerships to achieve transformative change by 2030. In particular, the SDG Agenda sets unprecedented and ambitious goals and targets for gender equality and the empowerment of women that will require the commitment of a wide diversity of stakeholders for their achievement. Partnerships have the greatest potential for enhancing the relevance of UN Women interventions, making a strong case for leveraging recent successes in improving partnership relationships to build greater effectiveness.

Building on the track record of the region as a pioneer for GEEW, UNW engages with a wide range of partners: States, feminist and women's movements, Academia, the private sector, media organizations, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the international donor community.

## **Innovation in Partnerships**

- Private sector: invest and scale up promising partnership models
- Media partnership models: Pro-bono services, media think tank, roll out of Unstereotype alliance in LAC (e.g. Cartagena Inspira event in Colombia)
- Digital innovation and STEMs
- Gender impact investment facility

## **Movement Building**

- Leverage Beijing+25 review process and the XIV Regional Conference on Women to generate large-scale regional mobilization

- Strengthen voice, agency, knowledge and capacities of women's organizations
- Bring social campaigns to new levels building on the Unstereotype Alliance

## **UN Coordination**

- Generate and position common UN system analyses on gender equality and women's empowerment in high level national, regional and global strategic fora, including fora related to SDG monitoring and reporting such as the High-Level Political Forum in New York and the Forum of LAC countries on Sustainable Development
- Ensure integration of gender equality and women's empowerment in UN joint planning and programming, including Common Country Analyses and United Nations Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF). 57% of UNW programmes in LAC are delivered through joint programmes
- Increase accountability of the UN System on gender equality and women's empowerment through the application of the UNCT SWAP gender scorecard
- Lead and co-lead numerous inter-agency coordination groups at national and regional level, especially gender groups





# Fórum WEPs 2018

Forum dos Principios de Empoderamento das Mulheres. Um dialogo entre países da America Latina e Caribe e a União Europeia.

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UN Women

MULHERES E

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