



**Strategy on Prioritizing Women of African Descent in UN Women's work
in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) 2016-2018**

1. Introduction
2. Afro descendant women's realities and situation in Latin America and the Caribbean
3. Normative framework related to Afro descendent women
4. Prioritized strategic actions
5. Partnerships, alliances and working group on afro descendent women

Annex 1. Roadmap to prioritize work with women of African descent

1. Introduction

This strategy intends to guide the work on afro descendant women carried out by UN Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its purpose is twofold. On the one hand, it intends to support the work of UN Women LAC in the implementation of and follow up to normative processes specifically related to afro descendent women. Some of these are the International Decade on Afro Descendent People, as well as those related to women's human rights and women's empowerment (CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, Montevideo Consensus, among others). On the other hand, the strategy intends to inform the achievement of competency within UN Women LAC programmatic work to strategically prioritize afro descendant women in relevant programmatic and coordination initiatives and support programmatic expansion in all areas of work. The end goal is to prioritize the work with women of African descent as part of UN Women normative, programmatic and coordination work so as to support them in fulfilling their rights.

The need to prioritize afro descendent women in development interventions has been significantly highlighted as part of the outcome of the recent review of the implementation of global normative frameworks such as the CEDAW examination of States' periodic reports, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+20), the Millennium Development Goals (CSW 58), the Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+20), the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (Durban+10), among others. At the regional level, afro descendant and indigenous women have also received particular attention at the Regional Conferences on Women as attested by the outcome regional consensus (Santo Domingo 2013, Brasilia 2010 and Quito 2007) and at the Regional Conference on Population and Development, as attested by the Montevideo Consensus (2013). During the II Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Montevideo Consensus was ratified and an Operational Guide for the implementation and monitoring of this Consensus was developed. In fact, the first chapter of the Operational Guide deals with priority measures on the Afro-descendant women's issues including their rights, combatting racism and racial discrimination and promoting affirmative action for people of African descent.

In addition, the International Decade on People of African Descent, Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the necessity to dedicate special attention and effort within UN Women's agenda to support the reduction of the inequalities and injustices that afro descendent women face in comparison to other women and to other groups of population. In this regard, the Declaration of the International Decade of People of African Descent calls for further efforts, emphasizing that millions of human beings continue to be victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including their contemporary manifestations, encouraging and exercising different types of violence.¹

Indeed, during the Black Women's March that took place in Brasilia in November 2016, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka recalled the importance of secure spaces where black women's voices can be heard, stressing their strength, their struggle their dignity and their culture.²

¹ Proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, Resolution 68/237 adopted by the General Assembly on 23 December 2013

² For more details, see <http://lac.unwomen.org/en/noticias-y-eventos/articulos/2015/11/executive-director-visits-brazil>

For this, as emphasized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC),³ it is not sufficient to simply recognize the existence of hegemonic norms in society, culture, economy and politics. New social, political, cultural and economic connections must be devised which depict afro descendant active citizenship as equal and as rooted in the full range of women's diversity. Discrimination against women, further aggravated by racism against Afro descendant women, is the expression of complex intersections that cause exclusion.

On the occasion of the first regional meeting held in the context of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (December 2015), the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a comment on the Brasilia Declaration, urged States to ensure that women and men of African descent are active partners in the design of development initiatives. He also reaffirmed the support for the establishment of African Descent People Forums and supports the development of a United Nations draft declaration, highlighting the importance of starting work as soon as possible. UN Member States also committed to adopting affirmative action policies to mitigate and correct inequalities in the enjoyment of human rights in access to quality education and health services, and employment, according to the particularities of each country.

According to UNDP,⁴ the regional population of people of African descent reaches 30% of the total regional population, which - taking into account the Comparative demographic indicators for Latin America and the Caribbean released by ECLAC⁵ - translates into more than 200 million people. The afro descendant population forms an exceptionally big part of total inhabitants in countries like Brazil and Colombia as well as most of the countries in the Caribbean. About 50% of the afro descendants in the region are women, i.e. at least 100 million in total, which gives an estimate of approximately 15% afro descendant women within the total population in LAC.

2. Afro descendant women's realities and situation in LAC

Gender and ethnic disaggregated data and statistics which account for the specific situation and status of afro descendent people in general, and afro descendent women in particular, are often obsolete or non-existent in the LAC region. However, the data and statistics that *do* exist reveal a reality for afro descendant women in Latin America as often experiencing significant inequality, discrimination and injustice in various fields including the economic, political and social realms, showing the structural character of gender and racial inequalities in the region. This is clearly revealed by some of the available indicators, data and statistics at regional and country level as listed below:

Selected inequality indicators at a regional level:

- Of the 620 positions held by women parliamentarians in Latin America, of a total of more than 4000, only 7 are held by black women. Therefore, as long as the quota system does not recognize racism as a regulator of society, the system will itself continue to reproduce racial exclusion.⁶

³ ECLAC 2010. *Concept Document: Challenges and Opportunities of the Economic Empowerment of Afrodescendant Women*. Brasilia, 2010.

⁴ See <http://www.afrodescendientes-undp.org/page.php?page=1>

⁵ ECLAC 2003. Demographic Bulletin, Latin America and the Caribbean: Population ageing.

⁶ ECLAC 2010. *Op. Cit.*

- A recent study showed that Afro-Latin Americans often have little or no job security, which is proof of racial segregation throughout the region. Racial discrimination in the labor market stems from inequities in the education sector.⁷
- The black population in general has a harder time gaining access to, making progress in, not falling behind and staying in school, and usually attends poor quality schools.⁸
- The economic marginalization of afrodescendant women manifests itself in their exclusion from the full participation in the investments in human capital and productive occupation of their respective countries as well as the structural limitations of accessing productive resources.⁹
- In many cases, afrodescendants do not live under adequate housing conditions, where women do not have independent access to housing.¹⁰
- Afrodescendants in general – and women in particular - are overrepresented among poor people. In the conditions of poverty afrodescendant women live in, they do not count with basic services like drinking water, electricity, sanitary services or refuse collection.¹¹
- In all of the countries in the region, afrodescendant women are overrepresented in informal work. This is a consequence of the inability of the states to respond to their low participation in the labour market and the high rates of unemployment. The informal sector is characterized by the following aspects: low salaries, instability of activities, non-existence of social security and as a consequence, the impossibility for them and their families to overcome poverty and marginalization.¹²
- The absence of public policies favouring the situation of afrodescendant women support the problems that are related to the poverty of these ethnic groups.¹³
- The health system neglects afrodescendant Women in many regions which is why they are more vulnerable to some diseases (as e.g. diabetes type 2, uterine myogenic tumors, high blood pressure, sickle-cell anaemia)¹⁴
- Some countries in the region include questions on afrodescendant population in their official census. In particular, only 9 countries (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua) have collected information in this field.¹⁵

Selected key inequality indicators at country level:

- In Brazil, white men earn, on average, 258% more than black women.¹⁶ There are practically no black women in management roles in business and the 2015 Map of Violence indicates that killings of women of this group have increased by 54 per cent over 10 years, contrasting to the

⁷ Antón *et al.* / ECLAC (2009) *Afrodescendientes en América Latina y el Caribe: del reconocimiento estadístico a la realización de derechos*. Santiago de Chile. 2009.

⁸ See https://www.oas.org/dil/esp/afrodescendientes_proyecto_capacitacion_taller_panama_27-29_marzo_2012_presentaciones_Red_de_Mujeres.ppt.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Visibilidad estadística de la población afrodescendiente en América Latina: aspectos conceptuales y metodológicos. Fabiana Del Popolo. CELADE-División de Población. CEPAL

¹⁶ UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean Strategic Note 2016-2017

fact that there was a decrease among white women. Approximately 48 million black women constitute half the female population of Brazil, yet 70 per cent of the 13 million families benefiting from the Bolsa Familia programme (the Brazilian conditional cash transfer programme) are headed by women of African descent.¹⁷

- In countries like Colombia, the Afro-Colombian population experiences the consequences of armed conflict disproportionately.¹⁸ According to statistics of the formal record of victims of the Colombian armed conflict, Afro-Colombian, Raizal and Palenqueras women represent 28% of the population in forced displacement. They experience the disproportionate impact of armed conflict expressed in the abrupt change from rural to urban life. Black women in cities suffer racism, exclusion and have poor working conditions. In most cases become domestic workers with low pay and regulation and without access to education and other rights.
- In Costa Rica, Afro-descendant women have been discriminated against in access to employment, despite having higher levels of education, and most of them being bilingual. They are scarcely represented in management and leading positions or in the workplace which is another reason why poverty is over-represented in Afro-descendant majority population areas.¹⁹
- In Cuba, overall unemployment is 1.6%, but even though Afro-descendant women constitute 46% of the country's labour force, their unemployment rate reaches 2%.²⁰

In the Caribbean, afro-descendants are in the majority and afro-descendant women have a history of strong activism from Nanny of the Maroons and the Voodoo priestess that led the ceremony which began the Haitian revolution, to the women who lead the women's movement today. Afro-descendant women in the English and French speaking Caribbean do not face similar forms of race based discrimination that their Latin counterparts do, but face the same obstacles to social, political and economic empowerment and gender equality that all women in the Caribbean face. There are however significant challenges regarding personal empowerment that afro-descendant women in the English and French speaking Caribbean face, especially related to self-confidence because of very Euro-centric beauty standards.

In the search for reliable recent data and statistics on afro descendent women in the region, with the exception of some countries, the lack of such information is symptomatic of a generalized challenge. As an example, in the Dominican Republic, census and other official surveys fail to include any ethnic-racial categories so there is no data available on this population group as a whole neither on Afro-descendant women in particular. In countries where data and statistics exist, the challenge is to have consistent, gender and racial sensitive and periodic analysis be made and widely disseminated within society and key policy-makers. For example, in Brazil, the Ministry of Health has the best information system with sex and race disaggregated data. However, regular reports do not highlight this.

In spite of the weak data availability and production that could provide a more complete picture about the real situation of women of African descent, it is obvious that there are different realities and problems faced in the different countries as well as regionally. The general pattern in Latin America is one where afro descendant women face multiple challenges, while demonstrating extraordinary resiliency. This is

¹⁷ See <http://lac.unwomen.org/en/noticias-y-eventos/articulos/2015/11/executive-director-visits-brazil>

¹⁸ Dzidzienyo A. and Oboler, S. (2005) *Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos*.

¹⁹ Report on the Human Rights of Afro-Descendant Women of the Latin American and Caribbean Region. Red de Mujeres Afrolatinoamericanas, Afrocaribeñas y de la Diáspora. 2011.

²⁰ <http://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/afro-descendant-women-organise-towards-decade-people-african-descent-and-beyond>

especially true of the Caribbean where, in spite of sexism and the legacy of colonialism and slavery, afro-descendant women have thrived.

Besides the influence of racial discrimination and xenophobia, women of African descent can suffer from **multiple, aggravated and/or intersecting forms of discrimination based on age, language, social status, rurality, property, disability, sexual orientation, among other.**

This manifold discrimination causes women of African descent in Latin America to face significant obstacles in their respective societies and environments. They are often part of impoverished populations with little and/or no access to basic services (health, education, etc), productive resources (land, credit and housing), decent work, social protection and decision-making positions, among others. In addition, some traditional practices, such as early marriage, and high rates of underage pregnancy often curtail women's future opportunities and reinforce their economic dependency and vulnerability to violence.

Given the complex landscape of race, gender, and sexual relations in the contemporary, many women of African descent experience intersections between forms and systems of oppression such as sexism, racism, ethnic bias and classism. This can be exacerbated in vulnerable groups who experience additional oppressions such as those living with disabilities, women living with HIV/AIDS, rural women and those in the LGBTIQ community. Caribbean women activists and women in academia have been organizing to explore notions of pan-Africanism, Blackness, multiculturalism, patriarchy, Black women's exclusion when Black is the dominant space, racial-sexual politics, mixed-race identities, and interconnections among racism, sexism, and homophobia. Although the existence of different priorities and interests of Afro-descendent women are evident in the two sub-regions of Latin America (where they are minority) and the Caribbean (where they are majority), there are common interests such as empowerment and ending violence against women, even if different approaches may be applied. Indeed, structural causes of gender and racial inequality such as discrimination, racism and/or the legacy of colonialism and slavery, as well as patriarchy have similar effects across the region, leading in many cases to unequal access to services and goods, unequal distribution of unpaid care work and time use, gender violence, among other forms of inequality.

3. Normative framework

States have adopted a number of normative frameworks, policies and standards that reflect their commitments in support of the recognition and fulfilment of the rights of women of African descent and the eradication of discrimination and inequality, including the following:

3.1 International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024²¹

The General Assembly in its resolution 68/237 proclaimed the International Decade for People of African descent (2015-2024), with the theme "People of African Descent: recognition, justice and development." The Decade is a timely and unique opportunity to underline the important contribution made by people of African descent to our societies and to propose concrete measures to promote equality and to combat discrimination of any kind. It provides a solid framework for the United Nations, Member States, civil society and all other relevant actors to join together with people of African descent and take effective measures for the implementation of the programme of activities. In summary the programme objectives are:

²¹ See <http://www.un.org/en/events/africandescentdecade/>

- *Promote respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by people of African Descent, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;*
- *Promote a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies;*
- *Adopt and strengthen national, regional and international legal frameworks according to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and to ensure their full and effective implementation.*

It is also a unique opportunity to build on the International Year for People of African Descent, which was observed by the international community in 2011, and to further underline the important contribution made by people of African descent to our societies and to propose concrete measures to promote their full inclusion and to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

In addition, the *Carta de Salvador por la Dignidad, los Derechos y el Desarrollo de las Personas, Pueblos y Comunidades Afrodescendientes*²² addresses the inclusion of a global repair with an afro diasporic perspective leading to the full enjoyment of social, economic, cultural, civil, political, environmental and development rights of people of African descent, with the establishment of concrete goals to address pending gaps by means of effective public policies with gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, generational and regional perspectives, among others.

3.2 The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action 2001²³

The promotion and protection of human rights of people of African descent has been a priority concern for the United Nations. Adopted at the World Conference against Racism which took place in Durban, South Africa in 2001, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action acknowledged that people of African descent were victims of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism, and continue to be victims of their consequences.

3.3 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1979²⁴

CEDAW promotes the elimination of all forms of discrimination and the achievement of gender equality so that all women can exercise and enjoy their human rights. Although there is no explicit specific provisions in CEDAW that recognizes women's intersectional identity, recent research²⁵ points out that CEDAW's provisions implicitly include a commitment to understanding and addressing intersectional discrimination. Indeed, the CEDAW Committee, in its Concluding Observations issued to States, include

²² Available at http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2869:carta-de-salvador-por-la-dignidad-los-derechos-y-el-desarrollo-de-las-personas-pueblos-y-comunidades-afrodescendientes&catid=42&lang=pt-BR&Itemid=280

²³ See <http://www.un.org/en/durbanreview2009/ddpa.shtml>

²⁴ See <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf>

²⁵ Campbell M. 2015. *CEDAW and Women's Intersecting Identities: A Pioneering New Approach to Intersectional Discrimination*. GÊNERO, RAÇA E POBREZA: A ABORDAGEM DE MÚLTIPLAS IDENTIDADES PELO DIREITO. Rev. direito GV vol.11 no.2 São Paulo July/Dec. 2015. Accessible at: http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1808-24322015000200479

recommendations related to identifying the interlinkages between sex and ethnic/race as well as other identity and factors that contribute to gender discrimination and inequality.

3.4 The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) 1965²⁶

One of the most widely ratified human rights treaties, CERD commits its members to the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of understanding among all races. CERD defines racial discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms,” and sets out state parties’ obligations to combat racial discrimination.

3.5 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995²⁷

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is an agenda for women’s empowerment and the promotion of their rights in all fields of life. It clearly emphasizes States’ commitment to “Intensify efforts to ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people”.²⁸

3.6 Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030²⁹

A key opportunity for substantive progress in advancing afro descent women’s empowerment and rights is the adoption by Member States of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, a specific goal (Goal 5) is dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls with the following targets identified:

5.1. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

5.3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;

5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

5.5. Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life;

5.6. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

5.a. Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws;

5.b. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

²⁶ See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>

²⁷ See <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

²⁸ UN 2015. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Accessible at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>

²⁹ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

5.c. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

Of key relevance is also SDG 10 dedicated to reduce inequality within and among countries. In addition to these specific targets, the entire Agenda 2030 and all the SDGs must take account of gender specific concerns, most of which relate directly to the realities of afro descendant women in the region. Agenda 2030 and the localization of the SDGs provide a critical platform to advocate for substantive equality legal reforms, adequate funding and progress in the production and use of gender and ethnic/race disaggregated data and information.

4. Prioritized strategic actions

This section details a series of prioritized strategic actions under each of the three mandates that UN Women has –normative, programmatic and coordination mandates – where a focus on afro descent women can be promoted. The actions, as it is the case with the mandates, are closely intertwined and intend to guide the mainstreaming of ethnic/race concerns in the work of UN Women LAC at country and regional level. A road map with the main strategic actions identified and indicative activities is included as Annex 1.

Regarding the **normative strategic actions**, UN Women intends to support States in taking concrete and practical steps through the adoption, modification, effective implementation and follow-up of their national legal and public policy frameworks to fulfil commitments made to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance faced by women of African descent and to promote their empowerment and fulfilment of their rights. The promotion and recognition of Afrodescendant people in general, and of women in particular, as well as their dignity, capabilities and contribution to development and prosperity is a fundamental premise in this work.

Civil society advocacy and follow-up efforts to monitor the progress in the implementation of commitments by States are major opportunities to further position the voice of LAC Afro-descendent women and strengthen accountability mechanisms through campaigns, observatories and related activities. The **Afro Descendent Women Leaders’ Political Declaration and Platform** and their monitoring instrument to follow up on the implementation of commitments made as part of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) will continue to be supported and their links with the SDGs strengthened.³⁰ The Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women working in collaboration to advocate and implement programmes that address gender and race based discrimination will be strengthened. Empowerment through raising awareness of the role afro-descendant women have already played and continue to play in sustainable development will continue to be supported.

³⁰ In June 2015, supported by UN Women, the first Summit of Afrodescendent Women Leaders of the Americas was held in Managua, Nicaragua, with the result of the adoption of the Afrodescendent Women Leaders Political Platform. RMAAD designed a monitoring tool to follow up on States commitments regarding the International Decade on People of Afro Descent, in particular, the implementation of 17 prioritized areas of work identified in the Political Platform. These instruments were further socialized in the region and at country level, including as part of exchanges with black women organizations in the Caribbean and in Brazil.

It is also essential to support the strengthening of the linkages and alliances among the movement of afro descendent women and the broader feminist and women's movement across both the Caribbean and Latin America, so as to have a stronger regional voice in following up on and influencing States' commitments towards women of African descent.

With regards to **programmatic strategic actions**, the need for UN Women LAC to expand its programmatic portfolio and mobilize resources must reflect a mainstreaming of ethnic/race considerations as part of the programme cycle in each UN Women impact area of work. In particular, the following UN Women LAC flagship programmes are a key platform to prioritize work with Afrodescendent women:

- Women's political empowerment (WPE)
 - Women's Leadership in Politics
 - Women's Access to Justice
- Women's economic empowerment (WEP)
 - Climate-Resilient Agriculture
 - Equal Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs
 - Income Generation and Security
- Elimination of Violence against Women (VAW)
 - Prevention and Access to Essential Services
 - Safe Cities & Safe Public Spaces
- Peace, Security and Humanitarian Ground (PSH)
 - Women's Leap in Crisis Response
 - Gender Inequality of Risk (DRM)
 - Women's Engagement in Peace, Security, and Recovery
- Planning and Budgeting (P&B)
 - Gender Statistics for Localization of the SDGs
 - Transformative Financing for GEWE

The support in the production of quantitative and qualitative data and information disaggregated by sex and ethnicity/race is a key area of programmatic focus. It is obvious that the realities and disadvantages faced by afrodescendent people in the region are not recognized nor prioritized in a sufficient manner. The difficulties in researching any kinds of region-specific, up-to-date statistics disaggregated by race and/or gender already sufficiently indicate both challenges and opportunities in this field. It is also important to highlight that the focus should also be placed in promoting a proper use of the gender statistics and disaggregated and the links between them and the development of inclusive programs and policies so that they are not misused to reinforce stereotypes and discriminating norms and practices. In spite of this, it is essential to align the strategy with the purpose of Agenda 2030 remarking that disaggregated data allows for the monitoring of Afro descendent women's realities in the region.

In addition, it is necessary to promote a human rights based use of gender statistics in order to avoid exacerbating stereotypes and discrimination practices and to identify risks and mitigation strategies such as advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives to promote a proper use of gender statistics and disaggregated data.

It is essential to support the elaboration of research and knowledge products on Afro descendant women to facilitate their mainstreaming in programming. It is also relevant to support the production of special census reports, incorporating the ethnic approach in the human rights and gender observatories, as well

as strengthening information systems to improve tracking and production data by sex, ethnicity and in contexts of armed conflict, type of violence.

It is also essential to identify concrete actions related to issues affecting women of African descent in concrete contexts such as, for example:

- Forced displacement (e.g. Colombia, Peru and/or Ecuador)
- Extreme poverty in urban favelas (e.g. Brasil and Colombia)
- The migration issue
- ZIKA and HIV issues affecting women of African descent

Finally, another key issue is the work on awareness and cultural transformation with men in a co-responsible and non-violent masculinities approach. In afrodescendent communities, the *macho* conceptions are deeply rooted. Also, women of African descent suffer from exclusion by both black men and mestizos: they are exploited as workers, as women by their attributes and their particular beauty and as black by their ethnicity. Likewise, in the armed conflict they are likely to be victims of sexual violence by armed actors. In that sense, to work not only with black men but men in general who are close to the afrodescendent communities is a major challenge.

Coordination actions within the UN System (i.e. UNDAF, etc) is also a strategic platform to support and promote the mainstreaming of sex and ethnic/race considerations in all joint efforts. One possible suggestion could be the elaboration of an Afro descendant scorecard, and/or an Afro System Wide Action Plan (SWAP) to support the implementation of and follow up on the International Decade.

5. Partnerships, alliances & working group on afrodescendant women

UN Women regular key partners for its normative, programmatic and coordination work include governmental institutions (including National Women's Machineries, Statistics Institutions, human rights commissions, etc), civil society organizations, the donor community, academia and the UN system.

Among civil society organizations, a key regional partner is the Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women (Red de Mujeres Afrolatinoamericanas, Afrocaribeñas y de la Diáspora, RMAAD) and their sister and member organizations at sub-regional and country level. Other civil society partners are the AWID (Association for Women's Rights in Development) and Black feminist organizations throughout the region³¹.

³¹ In September 2016, the 13th AWID International Forum with the theme Feminist Futures: Building Collective Power for Rights and Justice will be held in Costa do Sauípe, Brazil. The event will be a historic global gathering of women's rights and social justice activists and movements. Close to 2,000 participants from a broad diversity of movements and sectors will collectively strategize on how the feminist future can be co-created utilizing collective power for justice and rights. The 2016 AWID forum will include a diversity of feminist movements with special attention to Brazilian women's rights activists, to peace, economic justice, environmental, and human rights movements. Among the event, Black and Afrodescendant feminists will come together from diverse sectors, regions and identities across Africa and the Diaspora to explore, dialogue, debate, and share the intersections of their struggles and activisms. The Black Feminisms pre-Forum (BFF) will seek to create spaces that allow the creation and sharing of tools to fight against racism and sexism experienced in Afro descendant women daily lives. The Black Feminisms Forum can be an opportunity to renew actions and strategies, strengthening Afrodescendant Women's networks from Africa and Diaspora.

UN Women Civil Society Advisory Boards (CSAGs) at regional and country level as well as UN Women offices in Africa and/or HQ are key allies to exchange information, promote South South cooperation, share experiences, and seek guidance and advice on the above strategic actions.

Regarding potential donors, some possibilities to support awareness-raising campaigns and raise funds in support of programmatic expansion are:

- South-South cooperation with experienced players in the field of afro descendant women in Africa, more specifically UN Women Regional Offices and UN Women Country Offices in Africa, governmental, civil society and UN partners in countries that have shown great advances in combating racism and advancing gender equality (e.g. Rwanda and Liberia)³².
- The possibility of reaching out to mass media entities, female afro descendant celebrities (as well as persons not of direct African descent), recognized sportswomen and also using sport celebrities and sport events (e.g. Copa America) in order to promote racial equality can be explored to support massive public campaigns, including the use of corporate campaigns such as HeForShe, Planet 50/50 , the UNITE Campaign, etc linked with the objectives of the International Decade of People of African Descent.
- Donor governments that may be explored for resource-mobilization opportunities could be Canada, the USA and the United Kingdom among others.
- Private sector partnerships following corporate guidance and ensuring clearance
- Foundations could also be approached to support afro descendent women’s economic and political empowerment. As an example, the Ford Foundation has identified the elimination of inequalities as one of its priorities.

A further mechanism for partnerships and resource mobilization could be to support the creation of a specific fund³³ to fund initiatives linked to the empowerment of afro descendant women in the context of the Decade. The fund could target projects on economic and political empowerment (focused on intergenerational dialogues to renew and foster new leaderships) and ending violence against women. The fund could receive resources from public and private institutions

Media entities are essential allies for advocacy on women’s rights and fund raising campaigns and can also promote the strengthening of African descent women voices. In this sense, it becomes important enhancing the link involving men with strategies culturally appropriated.

Massive concert involving Afro-descendant artist from around the region.

³² Rwanda has highest percentage of women in office since 2004, among other achievements; President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is the first woman President in Africa and the country was founded by returning slaves

³³ During the CSW60 side event “Women of African Descent in the Diaspora: Shaping Racial Identity”, a civil society representative asked for the creation of such a fund.



UN Women LAC set up a working group on afro-descendent women in 2015 to identify concrete approaches and strategic actions to ensure the mainstreaming of gender and race concerns in programmatic, normative and coordination efforts. The current strategy has been revised elaborated and validated by the working group and will be further validated with external stakeholders.

Annex 1.- Roadmap to prioritize work with women of African descent

| Priority strategic actions | Key results | Indicative activities |
|---|---|---|
| Normative work | | |
| Agenda 2030 and SDGs | Ethnic, racial and gender concerns are mainstreamed in the localization of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs at country level to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance faced by women and girls of African descent | Statistics and monitoring Knowledge production |
| | The implementation of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs at national and regional level advance the commitments with regards to women and girls of African descent | Advocacy Knowledge production |
| | The follow-up to the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs at country level reveals progress in the fulfilment of commitments in relation to women and girls of African descent | Statistics, reporting and monitoring |
| International Decade of People of African Descent Brasilia Declaration 2015 Durban Declaration and Plan of Action | <p>Public policies, taking into account the specific needs and realities of women and girls of African descent, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health, reproductive rights and adequate access to maternal health care designed and implemented</p> <p>Legal reforms advance to change discriminatory laws</p> <p>Accountability for States' progress in implementation of commitments regarding Afro descendant women enhanced</p> <p>Afrodescendant people recognized as main contributors to the development and prosperity of their societies and nations</p> <p>Participation in the decision-making processes of Afrodescendant women in all their diversity (rural, urban, migrant, sexual diversity, among others) guaranteed to combat ethnic, racial and gender discrimination.</p> | <p>Technical support Capacity development</p> <p>Technical support Capacity development</p> <p>Civil society monitoring tools Governmental reporting</p> <p>Advocacy Campaigns Knowledge products</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Other international human rights frameworks (CEDAW, UPR, Beijing Platform for Action, regional consensus) | <p>CEDAW reporting (official, confidential UNCT and civil society reports) and UPR reporting processes reflect the status of Afro descendent women and girls and issue specific recommendations</p> <p>Socialization and diffusion of CEDAW and UPR recommendations feed all UN Women programmatic, normative and coordination work</p> <p>Beijing Platform for Action recommendations regarding afro descendent women and girls implemented at country level</p> | <p>Technical support Capacity development</p> <p>Advocacy Campaigns Knowledge products</p> |
| Programmatic | | |
| Flagship Programmes Initiatives and Products | <p>Gender and ethnic/race considerations mainstreamed in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all UN Women programmatic initiatives including the flagship programmes, at regional and country levels</p> | <p>Technical support</p> |
| | <p>The production of data, statistics and information about the specific situation and status of women and girls of African descent is strengthened (i.e. Isoquito e Isomontevideo, RMAAD Observatory on Afro descendant women, Flagship on Gender Statistics)</p> | <p>Technical support Knowledge products Advocacy Campaign</p> |
| Guidance in programming | <p>The elaboration of a guidance document on how to mainstream afro descendent women's priorities in the design and implementation of programming interventions</p> | <p>Knowledge products</p> |
| Coordination | | |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | Gender and ethnic/race considerations mainstreamed in coordination initiatives including the support provided to UNDAF processes, inter-agency working groups and other inter-agency initiatives | Technical support Knowledge products |
|--|--|---|

