

ECLAC

**ORGANIZED PRESENTATION OF THE INFORMATION OBTAINED
BY MEANS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO GOVERNMENTS
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION (1995)
AND THE OUTCOME OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2000)**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Part I

Overview of progress achieved and problems encountered in promoting gender equality and strengthening the role of women

Points of convergence

Organized presentation of the information submitted by the Governments

Argentina

Barbados

Bolivia

Costa Rica

Cuba

Chile

Dominica

Ecuador

El Salvador

Guatemala

Honduras

Mexico

Nicaragua

Paraguay

Puerto Rico

Dominican Republic

Suriname

Uruguay

Venezuela

Part II

Progress in implementing measures addressing the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the further initiatives and activities identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Points of convergence

Organized presentation of the information submitted by the Governments

Argentina

Barbados

Bolivia

Costa Rica

Cuba

Chile

Dominica

Ecuador
El Salvador
Guatemala
Honduras
Mexico
Nicaragua
Paraguay
Puerto Rico
Dominican Republic
Suriname
Uruguay
Venezuela

Part III

Institutional development

Points of convergence

Organized presentation of the information submitted by the Governments

Argentina
Barbados
Bolivia
Costa Rica
Cuba
Chile
Dominica
Ecuador
El Salvador
Guatemala
Honduras
Mexico
Nicaragua
Paraguay
Puerto Rico
Dominican Republic
Suriname
Uruguay
Venezuela

Part IV

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

Points of convergence

Organized presentation of the information submitted by the Governments

Argentina
Barbados
Bolivia
Costa Rica
Cuba
Chile
Dominica
Ecuador
El Salvador
Guatemala
Honduras
Mexico
Nicaragua
Paraguay
Puerto Rico
Dominican Republic
Suriname
Uruguay
Venezuela

Introduction

The multi-year programme of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women for 2002-2006 includes, for the forty-ninth session of the Commission in March 2005, a review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000).

The Regional Conference is a subsidiary body of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and convenes on a regular basis. Its purpose is to identify women's needs at the regional and subregional level, formulate recommendations, undertake periodic assessments of the activities carried out in fulfilment of relevant regional and international plans and agreements and serve as a forum for debates on related issues.

The review and appraisal by the Commission will identify achievements, gaps and challenges and provide an indication of areas where measures and initiatives are most urgently needed for further implementation.

To prepare for the review, the United Nations Secretariat drew up a questionnaire which, complementing existing sources of information, permits to compile information from Governments on the major achievements and obstacles in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (September 1995) and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (June 2000).

The questionnaire consists of four parts.

In Part One, reporting States are invited to provide a brief analytical overview of their specific experience in implementing the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The States are asked to highlight their achievements and the obstacles that they encountered in the implementation process since 1995; and to indicate the priority areas on which they focused taking into account the gender-based views considered in the major debates on legislative change, policy, budget decisions and national development,

Part Two focuses on implementation in the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action and in areas that the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly identified as areas requiring further initiatives and action, particularly as regards policy development, legislative change, programmes and projects undertaken and targets set. Reporting States are encouraged to provide information on successful measures taken, achievements and impacts, and to identify remaining obstacles, challenges and gaps in the critical areas of concern.

Part Three focuses on institutional development, namely on the structures and measures that the countries have put in place in order to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. It covers the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, in relation to institutional and financial arrangements. Reporting States are encouraged to provide information on their national machinery, capacity-building programmes for line ministries, resource allocation, monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and partnerships.

Part Four focuses on information on key persisting challenges and constraints and on any plans for future measures and initiatives to address them. Reporting States are encouraged to indicate any commitments that they intend to make as from 2005 to implement the Platform for Action in each

critical area of concern and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

The questionnaire aims at eliciting qualitative than quantitative information. The focus should be on implementation, particularly on the results of the initiatives and activities described, on achievements and on impacts on the status of women and gender equality.

Part I

Overview of progress achieved and problems encountered in promoting gender equality and strengthening the role of women

Points of convergence

Since the adoption of the United Nations Charter in 1945, gender equality has been accepted as a fundamental human rights principle. Pursuant to various international treaties, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Global Plan of Action (GPA), the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), over and above the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the Millennium Summit commitments, including the respective targets and proposals, the signatory States have an obligation to adopt measures against discriminatory practices, given that the full development of any country requires maximum women's participation on equal terms with men in all areas.

Effective gender mainstreaming in the programmes and projects developed by the Governments is an essential task requiring appropriate mechanisms. In that connection, the international conferences provide ways and a formal basis for promoting equal rights.

The reporting States express a common interest in institutionalizing national policies for women, conducive to making gender equality a cross-cutting theme in the programmes, plans and projects carried out under the economic and social policy of the Governments and in modernization processes in every State. Furthermore, they generally recognize that a national policy for women provides a basis for discussing and coordinating efforts at the level of State institutions, civil society and cooperation bodies and undertaking activities to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Platform for Action for Women, the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and other international agreements.

The reporting States further recognize that, although progress has been achieved in various areas of the Platform of Action for Women, much remains to be done to ensure gender mainstreaming in every State's national and institutional planning with a view to ensuring gender equality. Transforming the perceptions and attitudes in the state apparatus is a long-term task.

The reports submitted provide evidence of significant achievements in fulfilling commitments. At the same time, it will be possible to remedy the weaknesses specific to particular areas, if current relevant activities are pursued and new technical and political strategies, based what has been achieved, are implemented with a view to supporting proposals, programmes and projects conducive to improving the status of women in society.

Organized presentation of the information submitted by the Governments

Argentina

Overview

In Argentina, gender mechanisms have played a major role in helping to incorporate the gender perspective through a variety of processes, including drafting and tabling draft laws and planning programmes containing a gender perspective.

The State policy for the advancement of women, entailing both institutional and legislative measures, includes the following:

- Constitutional rank for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and inclusion of affirmative action to promote equal opportunities for men and women to elective and political party positions in the chapter on “New Rights and Guarantees” of the Constitution.

There has been significant progress in terms of women's participation in power and decision-making structures, following the 1991 adoption of Act No. 24.012, known as the Women's Quota Act, which requires both houses of the National Congress to have a female membership of at least 30 percent. A similar process was recently set in motion to establish a female quota in the National Supreme Court, and a bill has been passed establishing that the country's top ranking judicial body “may not draw more than 70 percent of its membership from the same sex”, providing for gradual compliance.

- Coordination among women members of Congress in order to promote the enactment of laws that are of common interest on gender or other compatible grounds.
- Incorporation of the gender perspective in plans, projects and programmes.
 - Federal Plan for Women: This programme is funded jointly by the Government and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for the period 1999-2003, to provide institutional strengthening for the National Women's Council (CNM) and for women's offices in provinces and municipalities throughout the country. It also includes civil society organizations concerned with women's issues. Moreover, a jurisdictional coordination network with contact points is being developed. Gender-sensitive qualitative indicators have been devised to measure the results and impact of the projects financed.
 - Technical Assistance Project on Gender (PROGEN): This is a programme for inter-agency cooperation, exchange and coordination of resources, designed to facilitate addressing gender-differentiated needs and concerns in projects funded by the World Bank in Argentina.
 - Family Strengthening and Social Promotion Project (PROFAM, World Bank loan): This program is aimed at supporting projects that focus on assisting poor families, from a cross-cutting gender perspective, with a view to gender mainstreaming in public policy formulation and implementation and monitoring procedures. PROFAM should ultimately strengthen informal social networks, encourage families to take a greater part in formulating

local programmes, and build permanent relations between civil society organizations and local governments in order to back practices that provide support to families.

Barbados

Overview

The Government of Barbados has implemented some positive measures to ensure the development of women and the exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms on equal terms with men. Barbados has made considerable progress in the elimination of direct discrimination against women in all areas. However, the agenda for change and asserting women's rights is still incomplete as the need for a national policy on gender issues persists.

The Barbados Government signed the CEDAW Convention in 1980. Much of the social and legislative changes that have occurred regarding gender equality have taken place under CEDAW. Examples include the Family Act, which gives equal rights to women within common-law unions, including property rights; legislation against domestic violence; a decree providing protection from intrafamily violence; and a decree against sexual abuse.

In June 1994, the Barbados Government also signed the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belem Do Para Convention) and subsequently appointed the National Council on Gender (NACG) for a period of three years. NACG will focus on assisting in the formulation of a national policy and a national plan of action on gender issues.

With the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Barbados Statistical Service established an MDG social indicators committee aimed at:

- promoting cooperation between producers and users of social, gender and environment statistics and indicators; and
- pooling resources in order to improve the quality and timeliness of those tools.

The Office of Gender Affairs, in carrying out its mandate, has further built its cooperation with various Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, the National Organization of Women and the Business and Professional Women's Club) and established links with the Men's Educational Support Association (MESA).

Integrating a gender perspective in macroeconomic policies is a major objective of the Beijing Platform for Action. Accordingly, the Government has taken steps to introduce a gender-based approach in the budget processes and has participated in a pilot project sponsored by the Ministry of the Treasury and aimed at raising awareness regarding gender issues. Furthermore, the Office of Gender Affairs has made the formulation of a national policy on gender and development one of its priority objectives.

Bolivia

Overview

The National Social Policy Council was established in 1991 and it drew up the Ten Year Plan of Action for Children and Women, which led in 1992 to the establishment of the National Agency for Minors, Women and the Family. That body produced the National Women's

Programme, which signalled a radical shift from a welfare approach to a social investment and efficiency perspective, complete with government policy proposals recognizing the multiplier effect of improving conditions for women.

The Ministry of Human Development was established in August 1993, with a division called the National Secretariat of Ethnical, Gender and Generational Affairs and an Assistant Secretary of Gender Affairs. From then on, the State had a structural mechanism for the advancement of women, responsible for formulating policies for women, in which gender was a conceptually, analytically and operationally key dimension of human and sustainable development.

The Executive Branch was restructured in 1997-2002, giving rise to the Vice-Ministry of Gender, Generational and Family Affairs and the Directorate of Gender Affairs, within the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Planning.

Currently, gender affairs have been reassigned to the Vice-Ministry of Women (VMM), a dependency of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, with policies aimed at the full exercise of women's rights and focusing on the economic sphere.

There has been considerable progress with gender mainstreaming in Bolivia's regulatory framework and the promulgation of specific laws, such as Act No. 1674 against Intrafamily or Domestic Violence.

The period from 1993 to 1997 was characterized by recognition of the effects of structural adjustment, a deepening of poverty and social exclusion, and acknowledgment of the existence of specific minorities with distinct needs depending on their ethnic, generational and gender status.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Gender Affairs (SAG) was established in 1993, as part of the National Secretariat of Ethnical, Gender and Generational Affairs (SNAEGG). It was the first official institution of this kind in the Executive branch. At the same time, gender equity became a mandatory component of human development policies and a prerequisite for the legitimacy of the State and the political system. SAG coordinated the demand expressed by the women's movement with the political will of the Government to address the issue of inequalities and historical inequity and find a place for it in its macro policy agenda.

Between 1997 and 2002, government policy included Bolivia's Poverty Reduction Strategy, which acknowledged the feminization of poverty and the need for a gender perspective cutting across all sectors, and led to the promulgation of Executive Decree No. 24864 on equal opportunities for men and women.

In Executive Decree No. 26350 of 11 October 2001, the Bolivian State adopted as state policies the National Gender Equity Plan, the National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Gender-related Violence, and the Programme for the Reduction of Poverty in relation to Women 2001-2003. The Vice-Ministry of Women was set up in August 2002, as part of the restructuring of the Executive (under the LOPE Act). Until March 2003, it came under the Ministry of Tenant-Farmer and Indigenous, Gender and Generational Affairs. Then it became part of the Ministry of Sustainable Development.

Subsequently, general guidelines were provided in government plans and put into effect through an Equal Opportunities Plan for Bolivian Women (PIOMB, 1997), designed by the SAG and partially incorporated into the Gender Equity Plan 1998-2002 (PEG). The National Gender Equity Plan, the

National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Gender-related Violence, and the Programme for the Reduction of Poverty in relation to Women 2001-2003, which were established by Executive Decree No. 26350 as government policies on gender issues, are in line with international recommendations and particularly with the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Then the 2001-2003 National Gender Equity Plan was drawn up and implemented. Agreement was reached with civil society on a Minimum Gender Platform and, based on a civil society initiative, a mechanism was established and promoted by the State for monitoring and evaluating compliance with government policies on gender issues.

In October 2003, the Constitutional President of the Republic was forced to resign and a new Government took over, led to this day by the then Vice-President Carlos Mesa. It will be up to the new Government to implement the latest Plan for Equal Opportunities and Full Exercise of the Rights of Women, which has already been negotiated with the sectors concerned.

The current guidelines are those contained in the National Plan on Government Policies for the Full Exercise of the Rights of Women 2004-2007, currently being discussed with the Bolivia's various social sectors with a view to subsequent adoption as government policy along with appropriate legal provisions.

The framework of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Committee's reports on States, inviting them to take appropriate measures, have had a marked impact on national legislation. They made it possible to introduce a gender perspective in the legislation.

In the education sector, measures are taken to keep girls and adolescents attending school by establishing rural boarding schools; and to train teachers to be more sensitive to the need for inclusive education, free of discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnic origin or class. Educational reform emphasizes non-discrimination between girls and boys. Work is also being done on arrangements to permit pregnant adolescents to stay on in school, as a fundamental women's right.

As regards labour, a huge pool of unemployed has been generated and the ranks of unpaid workers in the commercial sector have swollen, affecting up to 25 percent of the labour force, 67 percent of those affected being women. Domestic service, a sector where women predominate, is constantly expanding.

As regards legislation, the following instruments must be highlighted:

- Political Parties Act (Article 19, guaranteeing that 30 percent of the candidates are women).
- Electoral Code (Article 112, including conditions such as preferential rights for women in lists of candidates and alternation in the case of municipal elections).
- Act No. 1674 against Intrafamily or Domestic Violence and its implementing regulations, which define different forms of violence and ways of preventing and punishing them.
- National Agrarian Reform Service Act - INRA (Article 3, paragraph V, stipulating that equitable criteria with respect to women must govern the distribution, administration, holding and exploitation of land as a right guaranteed under the Constitution).
- Popular Participation Act, promoting the participation of women and men in the drawing up, supervision and monitoring of municipal development plans.

- Municipalities Act, establishing integral municipal legal services as precautionary mechanisms on behalf of women and the family and building women's and men's concerns into municipal development plans.
- Executive Decree No. 24864 on Equal Opportunities, promoting gender mainstreaming in government policies.
- Executive Decree No. 24864 on Equal Opportunities for men and women (1997), providing a suitable legal framework for gender equity policies based on international conventions.
- Draft Act against Sexual Harassment, which triggered a debate in the Chamber of Deputies, and is currently proposed in a form more punitive than preventive.
- Act No. 1674 against Family or Domestic Violence and its implementing regulations, having been pruned, amended and become more preventive than punitive in the process.

One of the main legislative achievements was persuading civil society, the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary to negotiate a minimum gender platform, which then became a Legislative Agenda for 2002-2007.

The relationship between the State and society is mediated through grassroots organizations, which take up social demands and fight to have them built into the framework of the State. A third sector consists of the NGOs, which generally provide logistical and financial support to the grassroots and political organizations. The Government is currently maintaining close ties with grassroots organizations, the idea being to carry out joint activities.

Costa Rica

Overview

On the way to attaining equality and equity in the country, the Costa Rican State established the National Institute of Women (INAMU) in April 1998, through Act No. 7801. The Institute was created as an autonomous body, with its own law and resources and a mission to address women's demands. One of the main goals of Act No. 7801 is to consolidate INAMU as a body with a states and attributions that enable it to implement public policies aimed at eradicating the social, political, economic, cultural and legal conditions that preclude women from full enjoyment and development of their human rights.

In addition to creating INAMU, the State has promoted specific legislation to address the needs of women's sectors that warrant special attention because their rights are particularly vulnerable. That legislation includes the instruments listed below.

Legal instruments enacted for the implementation of the Platform for Action:

- Act No. 7499 of June 1995, in which the Costa Rican State ratifies the inter American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women.
- Act No. 8089 of August 2001, the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- Act No. 7689 of August 1994, amending the Family Code with respect to the processing of lawsuits, community property (of husband and wife) and technical tests to establish paternity (Family Code reform).
- Act No. 8101 of April 2001 on Responsible Paternity, strengthening protection for children and encouraging mothers and fathers to share in the upbringing of their children.

- Act No. 7532 of August 1995 on the Regulation of De Facto Unions. This law recognizes the family formed as a result of common law unions for asset purposes and incorporates in the Family Code the recognition of the rights of couples living in such unions.
- Act No. 7654 of December 1996 on Maintenance Payments.
- Acts No. 7491 of May 1995 and No. 7621 of September 1996, amending Article 95 of the Labour Code. The purpose of this legislation is to enable pregnant workers to earn full pay during pre- and postpartum, breast-feeding and child adoption periods. Act No. 8107 of August 2001 adds to the Labour Code an eleventh title conferring constitutional status to the right to work and prohibiting any form of discrimination in employment.
- Act No. 7653 of December 1996, amending the Electoral Code to guarantee political participation and representative function for women.
- Act No. 7878 of June 1999, amending article 76 of the Constitution. This constitutional amendment requires the State to ensure that the nation's indigenous languages are maintained and nurtured.
- Act No. 7769, published in May 1998 on Services for Women Living in Poverty, providing for an Inter-Institutional Commission to formulate policies and programmes addressing the needs of that population group, giving priority to female heads of household.
- Acts No. 7735 of December 1997 and No. 8312 of 21 October 2002 on the Protection of Teenage Mothers, providing for an Inter-Institutional Commission to formulate policies and direct services to that population group.
- Act No. 7935 of October 1999, Comprehensive Act on the Older Adult.
- Act No. 7446 of February 1995 on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and in Education, based on the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women, which recognizes sexual harassment as a form of violence and a human rights violation.
- Act No. 7586 of April 1996 on Domestic Violence, setting out the obligations of the State as stipulated in the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, and designates the National Institute of Women as the leading body for public policies for detection, care, prevention and labour-market integration programmes for victims of violence.
- Act No. 7899 of July 1999 on the Sexual Exploitation of Minors. A national working commission consisting of representatives of public bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was established to combat the sexual exploitation of children and young people for commercial purposes.

Draft laws:

As part of the State's effort to combat and eradicate violence against women, the Domestic Violence Act is currently going through the legislative process (having been approved by the Legislative Assembly on second reading).

Progress:

The development of national legal instruments has succeeded in advancing women's rights in Costa Rica. The National Institute of Women (INAMU) has promoted the establishment of mechanisms in the branches of government to implement public policies aimed at ensuring gender equality.

These advances have helped to consolidate the following series of measures:

- Permanent monitoring of legislative bills relating to the recognition of women's rights and their incidence, through gender-sensitive criteria issued by national mechanisms for the advancement of women's rights.
- Definition of a legislative agenda involving progressive laws promoting recognition of women's labour, political and economic rights; the right to a life free from violence, the rights of the child, public institutional status for gender equality and equity, the rights of older adults and indigenous persons, the right to health, and the right to justice.
- Ratification of international and national laws for the advancement of women's rights.
- Creation and sustainability of mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in the executive and judiciary branches of government (2000/2003).
- Establishment of inter-institutional commissions for monitoring and ensuring the applicability of the laws promulgated.
- Creation of a mechanism to monitor compliance with women's rights by the Costa Rican State (State of Women's Rights, in process).
- Protection and promotion of the human rights of women, through a Specialized Centre, and coordination of legal services (CEPRODEM in process of implementation).
- Approaches in education on women's human rights through inter-learning processes aimed at evaluating the impact of activities and generating changes.
- Establishment of an inter-institutional consultative commission to monitor the recommendations made by CEDAW to the Costa Rican State (in process).

Development of National Plans of Action

Strategic measures that have been consolidated as achievements during the current administration:

- The housing sector is promoting the Programme of Services for Women Heads of Household.
- The inter-agency programme "Women growing together" aims to strengthen women living in poverty.
- The Strengthening for Life Training Programme, aimed at developing individual and collective capacities, extends coverage to adolescents living in situations of poverty and social risk.
- The Women's Vocational Training Programme, targeting women over 15 years of age, aims to incorporate women in training activities to facilitate their labour market entry.
- At the same time, two other projects will be implemented: creation of a National Programme of Childcare Centres.
- The System of Labour Market Certification with a Gender Equity Seal, which aims to promote a change of attitude and management in private and public organizations in Costa Rica, seeking to strengthen investment in the country's human and social capital under conditions of gender equality and equity.
- The Programme for the provision of credit services, technical assistance and marketing opportunities, in line with a supply of State services, taking into account the gender perspective and aiming at facilitating access to financial resources with collateral and interest rates that match women's particular needs and characteristics.

In the case of State action on domestic violence, efforts can be identified in various areas:

- National Plan for the Care and Prevention of Violence from and within schools. Specialized services will be strengthened for the prevention of domestic violence, guaranteeing continuous and regular provision of specialized care services.

- Comprehensive programmes for prevention, care and social reintegration in intrafamily violence cases (IFV) will be strengthened in all units of the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS).
- At the local level, prevention of IFV will be promoted through networks, for which the intention is to establish and prepare local inter-institutional and inter-sectoral networks, to act as multipliers of preventive activities against domestic violence.

In the health care area, there is a specialized care programme for teenage mothers. In joint action between the Ministry of Health and the CSS, the National System for Maternal Mortality Analysis will be strengthened.

Diagnostic studies carried out between the Government and officials of the National Institute of Women (INAMU) identified the following main challenges facing Costa Rican society as regards women:

- Reducing the feminization of poverty.
 - Improving educational and labour conditions for women.
 - Reducing intrafamily violence (IFV).
 - Improving the health status of women.
- The State should promote the formulation of policies for universal access to a system of health services and social security, focusing on comprehensive care and women's rights at all stages of the life cycle and highlighting the serious problem of teenage pregnancy.
- Making progress on gender equality and equity through State action.

Cuba

Overview

Cuba has been the first country to sign and the second to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. At the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, the Cuban Government undertook to proceed with the implementation of the Platform for Action. In April 1997, the National Action Plan for Follow-up of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women was adopted. This Decree-Law of the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba includes measures to remove obstacles and create material, spiritual, educational and ethical conditions that favour the continuous development and improvement of the situation of women in Cuba.

The Action Plan arose out of a proposal by the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), as a result of a seminar on "The Cuban Women of Beijing in 2000" attended by ministers, heads or representatives of institutions, experts and NGOs. Responsibility for its evaluation and monitoring lies with the Executive Secretary of the Council of Ministers, in cooperation with the Federation of Cuban Women. The Plan entered into effect on 7 April 1997. It comprises 90 measures relating to the adaptation of the areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action to the specific circumstances, needs and interests of Cuban women. It contains special measures relating to employment, education, legislation, health, participation in politics, women in the media, and sexual and reproductive rights.

Responsibility for evaluating and monitoring the Plan lies at the highest level, with the Executive Secretary of the Council of Ministers, in cooperation with the Federation of Cuban Women.

The Action Plan has been disseminated through the agencies of the State, as well as through the grass-roots organizations of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), its women and family

counselling centres and the women's affairs departments of universities. It has also been publicized in the media.

National seminars on the follow-up, review and evaluation of tasks set out in the Action Plan, in which each government agency at every level had to report on the implementation of the measures within its competence, were held in 1999 and 2000. The analyses of the National Action Plan for Follow-up of the Beijing Conference and the recommendations resulting from Cuba's Fourth CEDAW Report and the various summits and conferences have generated challenges which have met with a direct practical response.

Thus, various studies made by the National Statistics Office, in particular its survey of the use of time, to evaluate scientifically the participation in family life of the individuals who make up the family unit and consider what measures might be appropriate in this respect, have found practical application. In response to the Acton Plan, within the context of the Local Human Development Programme, a comparative study of the wages earned by men and women was carried out and is new in the analysis stage prior to generalization. Moreover, with a view to improving the tools for assessing female participation in various areas, a system of gender indicators is being developed. Work is also being done to improve the statistics on rural activities, disaggregated by gender, and for this purpose a study, now in the generalization phase, has been carried out with the Labour Research Institute.

In order to ensure that women are better represented at managerial level, an integral promotion strategy defining the responsibilities of the various institutions in this respect has been outlined. Further efforts have been made to improve the legislation in order to achieve full equality of opportunity and potential for men and women. Thus, the Labour and Family Codes are now in the analysis and implementation stage and, on 13 August 2003, Decree-Law No. 234 on working women's maternity, establishing the possibility of maternity leave being shared between the father and the mother by mutual agreement, depending on the needs and characteristics of each couple, and including the breast-feeding period.

In cooperation with UNICEF, an annotated version of the CEDAW has been prepared and published. This has been studied in the grass-roots organizations of FMC. Moreover, the document is being used as a source of reference in the women- and family-counselling centres spread across the country. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been published for similar purposes and use. All the measures adopted are directed towards mainstreaming the gender perspective across the country's plans and programmes.

Chile

Overview

The major signs of progress in fulfilling the commitments of the Beijing Platform for Action can be seen in the mainstreaming of the gender focus in government affairs and in the legal framework and in the greater visibility and legitimacy of gender equity issues and the public institutional response to those issues.

During the first democratic government the National Office of Women's Affairs (SERNAM) prepared an Equal Opportunities Plan 1994-1999, as a fundamental tool for fulfilling the accords that Chile accepted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

Implementation of this first Equal Opportunity Plan placed the emphasis on changes in the country's legal framework and introduced policies and initiatives for the advancement of women, dealing particularly with acute problems of discrimination such as intrafamily violence, teenage pregnancy, and the status of female heads of household (1). These policies resulted in various legislative initiatives and programmes intended to address the problems of gender inequality through State action.

Among the programmes and initiatives implemented during this period, mention may be made of the Programme for Low-income Female Heads of Household; the Programme for Female Seasonal Workers in Export Agriculture; Discussion Workshops on Emotional Health and Sexuality (JOCAS); the Information Centres on Women's Rights (CIDEM); the Interagency Commission on Intrafamily Violence; communication programmes for raising community awareness of this problem; and training for public officials and police officers (2).

The SERNAM prepared a second Equal Opportunities Plan for Women and Men for the years 2000-2010 (3), which consolidates gender policies in public institutions. The key challenge in this exercise now was to move the State towards full integration of policies with a gender focus.

One step forward in this area was the creation of the Council of Ministers on Equal Opportunity (4), the purpose of which is to oversee and implement the Equal Opportunities Plan and to incorporate specific policies with a gender content into government ministries, departments and enterprises. The Council also decided in 2001 to incorporate the gender focus into some of the budgetary instruments of the Ministry of Finance. Among the instruments that are to incorporate the gender perspective is the Management Improvement Programme. One of the systems of that programme relates to gender equity, and is designed to improve opportunities for women and men to obtain and enjoy the benefits of public policies.

On the legislative front, Chile's Constitution has been amended (5) to establish equality between men and women explicitly. Another historic milestone in Chile was the recent approval of the new Civil Marriages Act by the National Congress. This is a modern piece of legislation that amends an institution the regulations for which date back to 1884: it recognizes that marriage breakdown is not an exceptional phenomenon, it regulates its effects, and it stipulates various solutions that range from legal separation to outright divorce.

Developments in family law have included the following: Act No. 19.325 on Family Violence; Act No. 19.585 recognizing the juridical equality of children born in or out of wedlock; and Act No. 19.335 on sharing acquisitions and family property. In the labour field, the most important legislative initiatives were: Act No. 19.520, modifying the individual labour contract; Act No. 19.591, prohibiting employers from imposing employment conditions relating to pregnancy and extending the maternity rights regime to female domestic workers; and Act No. 19.505, granting workers special leave, if their children are seriously ill.

Dominica

Overview

The Government of Dominica signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and ratified its commitment to gender mainstreaming in social in macroeconomic policies systematically. Since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and its commitment to implement the goals of the Beijing Platform for

Action, the Government has endeavoured to eliminate discrimination against women in all areas and activities, a task that requires a change of institutional attitude concerning pro-equity issues. That in turn presupposes a national - political and social - agreement on a basic agenda concerning women's demands and rights, to which the various State agencies, social organizations, non-governmental organizations and international cooperation bodies would commit.

Responsibility for gender affairs currently lies with the Women's Bureau, a government agency. Its priorities include the formulation of a National Policy on Gender and Development incorporating the gender perspective in the national budgets.

A draft National Plan has been drawn up to address the issues of intrafamily violence, sex education, poverty, and education and health, with a view to raising awareness and providing training on these specific topics. A Report on Gender Analysis of Social Indicators is being finalized. Work is being done on the implementation of training programmes and ensuring greater coverage of educational projects promoting equal opportunities and gender equity. A major debate has focused on introducing or increasing penalties to protect women from various forms of violence. In view of the limited resources available for allocation to the implementation and operation of new plans and programmes, efforts are being made to strengthen - and increase participation in - the management of public resources, considering gender equity as a cross-cutting issue.

On the legislative front, there are amendments to existing legislation in the areas of family and intrafamily and sexual violence, as well as family code amendments with regard to lawsuits and Labour Code amendments aimed at implementing an employment policy seeking to maximize the use and utility of human resources.

Ecuador

Overview

In the ten years from 1995 to 2005, Ecuador underwent a series of severe crises, characterized by structural adjustment policies, political instability manifested in a succession of three governments in five years, and the consequent debilitation of democratic institutions. In that environment, the free exercise of human rights was impaired, with women and their families being the hardest hit. Nevertheless, despite the ungovernable state of the country, significant progress has been made since 1995 in terms of recognition of women's rights and government policies on gender issues.

As a consequence of Beijing, the women's movement in Ecuador was consolidated as a combination of different schools of thought and women's organizations. In 1996, following the Fourth World Conference on Women and based on the Beijing Platform for Action, the first Equal Opportunities Plan 1996-2001 was drawn up as part of a process headed by the then National Directorate for Women, DINAMU (currently the Council, CONIUM).

In 1997 "an institutional, state system [was consolidated], responsible for guaranteeing, implementing, and requiring recognition of women's rights, with the establishment of the National Council for Women as the oversight organ for government policies with a gender perspective" (6), combined with reinforcement of the National Congressional Committee on Women and the Family, which was granted by constitutional mandate the status of a Specialized Permanent Commission in 1998, and with the establishment, that same year, of the Office of the Assistant Director for Women and Children in the Office of the Ombudsman.

The institutional status of gender issues in Ecuador was strengthened in 1998 in the framework of the Constituent Assembly by the inclusion of women's rights in the Constitution. The Constitution contains a body of law which constitutes a valuable instrument for justice and the empowerment of women (7). The Constitution establishes fundamental principles, some of the most important of which are: non-discrimination and equal protection of law as well as the right to personal integrity and a life free from violence; freedom to decide on one's sexual life; the right to receive information and education on sexuality; the right to decide when and how many children to procreate; the right to receive equal remuneration for work of equal value; and equal rights and opportunities for women and men to access and determine productive and ownership resources.

Despite the headway made with legislation, in day-to-day practice Ecuadorian women are subject to dual discrimination: as women and on account of their ethnic and cultural origins. Diminishing these kinds of discrimination is an essential challenge the country faces.

From the start, CONIUM has focused on formulating, crafting, and guiding government policies on behalf of women in the areas in which it specializes: violence, education, sexual and reproductive health, the environment, development and local governments, using a number of different strategies.

In its initial phase, CONIUM managed to position gender issues on sectoral agendas, facilitating the incorporation of a gender perspective in programmes, plans, and projects in such a way as to transform women's lives through the promotion and protection of their rights and ensuring their access, on equal terms with men, to the fruits of development.

The Council has managed to position itself for carrying out its mission and to have an impact on agendas by adopting two strategies: through decisions that, when turned into laws and government macro policies on social issues, become mandatory for the various sectors; and through specific projects permeating the various levels of sectoral decision-making (8).

The challenge facing CONIUM in phase two is to achieve genuine understanding of the need to build a cross-sectoral vision into the formulation of gender equity policies, programmes, and projects. Likewise, it is essential to place the formulation and shaping of gender policies as a priority item on the public agenda, as a specific area within social protection and social macro policies. Alongside its work in this field, CONIUM is developing strategies that will allow it to influence the formulation of macroeconomic policies that, taken together, are geared to eradicating poverty, constructing democratic governance, and finding an alternative model for the sustainable development of the country.

Achieving these goals presupposes an institutional repositioning of the Council and of pro-equity issues via a national political and social pact focusing on a basic agenda regarding women's concerns and their human rights, in which the various State players, social organizations, women's organizations, an international cooperation partners need to make a commitment to the country.

CONIUM is currently working on a proposal to coordinate its institutional activities in connection with the proposed new Equal Opportunity Plan, which embodies the human rights systems that will guide the Council's work, with the approaches adopted in international conferences and conventions on human rights and development, especially those addressing women's issues and gender equity. Such coordination will, on the one hand, help shape pro-equity policies and, on the other, direct international cooperation agency resources and projects toward issues on Ecuadorian women's agenda and international commitments.

El Salvador

Overview

The Government of El Salvador endorsed the Millennium Declaration and it is undertaking the requisite action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. To this end, it has appointed a Presidential Commission for Social Affairs which coordinates national efforts to monitor and carry out schemes aimed at their attainment. As part of these efforts, the Salvadoran Government is taking the appropriate steps to cover the substance of the Fourth World Conference on Women and what was agreed at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. A National Policy on Women has been devised and two Plans of Action have been carried out. They have involved a gradual process of institutional adaptation which has resulted, inter alia, in an improvement in women's social and economic indicators.

For example, the purpose of poverty, hunger, health and education indicators linked to gender is to reveal real disparities between men and women in various social risk sectors. This makes it possible to guarantee comprehensive, consistent action to devise, or improve on, substantive measures.

Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3, referring to gender equality, has called for efforts on the part of the Ministry of Education in order to achieve significant progress towards the complete elimination of any sexual stereotyping throughout the education system. This has been done by introducing gender mainstreaming in schools (changes in the curriculum, revision of textbooks and teacher training). Special attention has likewise been devoted to technical training for non-traditional jobs and to vocational training at newly created Production and Training Centres for Women, which are sponsored by the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women (ISDEMU).

After the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1981, some big debates took place on how to incorporate gender perspective and take women's interests into account in legislation. It should be emphasized that the fact that CEDAW is in force in our country has facilitated the ratification and implementation of conventions like the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belem do Pain) and conventions of international bodies, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), which further women's interests.

Some of the chief achievements in the legislative field are:

- Approval of the Domestic Violence Act (1996) and amendments thereto (2002), in which appropriate mechanisms were put in place to prevent, penalize and end intrafamily violence;
- Revision of the Civil Code (1999), derogation from article 107, paragraph 1, to remove women's legal incapacity to act as witnesses to a solemn will, which was held in El Salvador to be a discriminatory provision;
- Ratification in 2000 of the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) of the ILO, which refer to equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value and to equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women workers, respectively;
- Revision of the Family Code (2004);
- Revision of the Family Procedural Code (2004);
- Amendment of the Family Property Act through a provisional decree;
- Revision of the Labour Code (2004); and

- Establishment of the Mutual Fund for Salvadoran Family Micro Businesses Act (FOSOFAMILIA).

The main debates in the Salvadoran Parliament concerning gender perspective and women's interests revolve around the introduction of new or tougher punitive measures to protect women against various forms of violence. Rape (9), sexual harassment (10), sexual exploitation and commercialisation (11) and trafficking in persons have been considered and discussed at length. Different measures have been approved in order to do more to root out these practices which impair women's well-being.

In El Salvador, a gender perspective has gradually been included in national budgets over the last 10 years. Financial resources channelled to the institutions responsible for carrying out the National Policy on Women to sponsor activities fostering gender equality were estimated to account for some 20 percent of the national budget approved for 2003. Efforts are currently under way to design and encourage the use of tools facilitating the elaboration of budgets and the monitoring of their gender focus.

Institutions like the Salvadoran Vocational Training Institute, the National Commission for the Development of Small Businesses, the Social Investment Fund for Local Development and a network of agencies that promote local development have backed various programmes that offer women greater opportunities to access new markets.

Some institutions have drawn up gender policies. They include the National Civil Police, CARITAS El Salvador (confederation of Catholic relief organizations), the Social Investment Fund, the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, the National Farming Technology Centre and projects run by the Ministry of Agriculture and Stockbreeding. In some municipalities, the formulation of gender policies has led to the creation of posts for women town councillors and units for gender issues.

Gaining access to information and knowledge has now become one of the priorities of the educational system, promoting research in academic centres that regularly publish studies on such topics as fertility, sexual and reproductive health, responsible male behaviour and responsible fatherhood, which fuel the debate and contribute new insights to these activities.

Guatemala

Overview

In 1997, in accordance with the peace agreements, the National Women's Forum was established through a consultative process with the goal of overseeing the fulfilment of the Government's commitments to women. During the 1999 electoral campaign, spokespersons for women in civil society presented the candidates for the Presidency of the Republic with a minimum agenda and platform of development proposals for Guatemalan women. In 2000, the Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM) was set up through Legislative Agreement No. 200-2000 of 10 October 2000, enacted in response to the demands of civil society women's organizations.

The first action taken by SEPREM was to seek consensus among women, who succeeded in condensing their requirements and proposals into a single document: the National Policy for the Advancement and Development of Guatemalan Women. That policy ranks as a State policy for women, since it represents the sum of the efforts of various organs of society and governmental

institutions. It has nine components: Economic Development, Land and Housing, Education, Comprehensive Health, Violence against Women, Labour, Legal Equity, Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women and Socio-political Participation. These components correspond to the areas of special concern of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Work was done on a proposal for statistical indicators disaggregated by sex that make possible a quantitative assessment of the effects that the measures taken have on women's lives.

In 2001, the Government formulated a poverty reduction strategy whereby it planned to give preferential treatment to the rural areas, strengthen public management, spur decentralization and increase citizen participation. This strategy considered gender equity one of the cross-cutting themes.

Work on education reform has been proceeding since 1997 in conjunction with the Joint Commission, while later the Advisory Commission was set up, bringing together governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including SEPREM, with the following results: curriculum change and the professionalization of teaching staff, with the gender theme incorporated as a thematic axis.

In the area of health, the national reproductive health programme and the national plan for the reduction of maternal mortality were implemented, the women's advisory board was set up and, very importantly, the Social Development Act was passed.

The Plan for Full Participation of Guatemalan Women and the Plan for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women (CONAPREVI) were formulated. And proposals were drawn up to design gender indicators and to incorporate the gender perspective in the State budget. SEPREM oversaw the participation of international assistance in order to support inter-institutional plans and activities, including activities undertaken with civil society organizations.

In the legislative and policy area the following are considered to be the main achievements:

- Legislative Agreement 200-2000, creating SEPREM.
- Decree No. 19-2002, the Act on National Languages, recognizing and expressing respect for the languages of the Maya peoples.
- Amendment to the Criminal Procedure Code, extending the competence of magistrate's courts and instituting mobile courts.
- Decree No. 51-2002, amending the Criminal Code, characterizing discrimination, including gender discrimination, as an offence.
- Decree No. 81-2002, Act on Promoting Education against Discrimination.
- Decree No. 27-2003, Comprehensive Child Protection Act.
- Establishment of the Unit for the Protection of Working Adolescents, attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, and of special courts for children and adolescents.
- Decree No. 36-2003, adopting the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols.
- Decree No. 50-2003, adopting the Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Adoption.
- Initiative No. 2565, providing for the adoption of the General Act on Food Security and Nutrition, which gives priority to population groups living in extreme poverty, including children, pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers.

- Initiative No. 2623, providing for an amendment to the Act organizing the National Civil Police and including provisions relating to respect for the dignity, honour and physical integrity of persons being searched and the need to avoid any abusive, arbitrary or discriminatory practices or those that violate rights, including property rights.
- Initiative No. 2630, amending the Criminal Code, characterizing intrafamily violence and sexual harassment as offences and providing for increased penalties for offences against women.
- Initiative No. 2758, amending the Civil Code in relation to the exercise of legal guardianship. Initiative No. 2881, amending the Health Code.
- Legislative Agreement 317-2002, implementing regulations for the General Act on Combating HIV/AIDS and the Promotion, Protection and Defence of Human Rights in Connection with HIV/AIDS.
- Legislative Agreements 417-2003 and 421-2003, instituting the National Coordinating Office for the Prevention of Violence against Women and providing for the involvement of the National Statistical Institute, which is considered to be an essential and strategic element for efficient monitoring of the recording of complaints.
- Legislative Agreement 258-2003, creating the National Compensation Programme, which is based on the principles of equity, justice, accessibility, social participation, and respect for cultural identity; and providing for the inclusion of a representative of women's organizations on the Commission.
- Legislative Agreement 229-2003, revising the implementing regulations of the Urban and Rural Development Councils Act, one of which provides that SEPREM shall be responsible for the election of women's organization representatives to the development councils.
- Legislative Agreement 526-2003, establishing the Third Vice-Ministry for Intercultural Bilingual Education within the Ministry of Education, a measure of historical significance from the perspective of the discrimination suffered by Guatemalan women and girls; and also establishing the Directorate for Indigenous Peoples within the Ministry of Labour.
- Ministerial Agreement SPM22-16-2003, adopting the implementing regulations for the Responsible Parenthood Network.
- Resolution 15-2003, urging the Ministry of the Interior to implement preventive security programmes to forestall acts of violence against women.
- Preliminary Draft Bill on the Prevention and Punishment of Acts of Sexual Harassment, currently under consideration in the Congress of the Republic, amending the Labour Code to characterize sexual harassment in the area of employment as an offence.
- Reform proposal, coordinated by the National Women's Bureau and involving changes which include equal pay, the rights of working women and their families, regulation of work in private homes, social recognition of motherhood, and equal rights in the workplace for parents of either sex.

On the basis of the enactment of the Development Councils Act, there is new room for SEPREM to participate at the national and regional level. The main objective of such participation is to incorporate the goals of the Women's Policy in national, sectoral and local strategies, plans, programmes and projects.

Honduras

Overview

The State of Honduras, specifically the present Government, has included in its Government Plan 2002-2006 the commitment "to support participatory arrangements which

promote equality of opportunities and gender equity" (12), and this is reaffirmed in the section on human development, which sets "the reduction of gender inequalities" (13) as one of the goals. This political will is being translated into concrete achievements, such as:

- The establishment of the National Institute for Women (INAM).
- The approval of legislation under the CEDAW - progress in which INAM, IACW, the Legislative Commission on Women of the National Congress and the country's women's movement played a proactive role.
- The official adoption by Executive Decree 015-2002 of the National Policy for Women: First National Equal Opportunities Plan 2002-2007, which raises policy in this area to the level of State policy (14). The Act establishing INAM invests the head of this institution with ministerial status and the right to participate in the Social Cabinet and the Council of Ministers. The Act also establishes the National Governing Council for Women as the INAM governing body.
- The formulation of sectoral policies, such as: the policy on gender equality in agriculture, the gender-equality policy of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the policy on sexual and reproductive health, and the initiative for gender mainstreaming in the formulation of the national revenue and expenditure budget.

One response to the big involved in poverty reduction in general and women's poverty in particular is the poverty reduction strategy itself, which includes an objective concerning equity and equality: to contribute to the comprehensive development of poor women by securing their full and effective participation in the country's social, political, cultural and economic life and empowering them through exercise of their rights and enjoyment of equal opportunities in access to health, education, justice and decent incomes.

INAM has also successfully initiated a process to furnish support to municipal women's offices, a move consistent with the State's intention to stimulate local development through its decentralization and local development programme (PRODDEL).

According to the 2001 population and housing census, in that year the female population was larger than the male (50.4 percent and 49.6 percent respectively) and there were more women than men in urban areas (52.39 percent). Although the gender development index (GDI) has shown a slight improvement in recent years (especially in health and education), the indicators from which the index is constructed still show substantial disparities, especially in terms of the income gap between men and women but above all in rural areas and in political participation by women.

Mexico

Overview

Mexico has pursued the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the social and human development area of the National Development Plan 2001-2016 (PND). In keeping with the development guidelines established in the PND at national level, the law creating the National Institute of Women (INMUJERES) (i) provides for preparation of the National Plan of Equality of Opportunities and Non-Discrimination against Women, 2001-2006 (PROEQUIDAD) (ii), as a follow-up to the National Programme for Women (1995-2000) (iii), which was carried out in order to implement paragraph 297 of the Beijing Platform for Action, regarding the preparation of national action plans.

Introduced in November 2001, PROEQUIDAD is a special programme to be implemented throughout the civil service in the three branches of government. It contains nine specific objectives relating to: gender mainstreaming, legislation, poverty, economy, education, healthcare, decision-making, violence and stereotypes.

In the electoral area, the reforms being implemented by the Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures (COFIPE), together with the presence of affirmative measures in 22 of the 32 state electoral laws, have had a clear impact on recognizing the civil and political rights of women and progress in improving women's access to public office (CEDAW article 7 (iv)).

One of the major achievements has been the General Act on Social Development (v), the goals of which include adherence to a National Social Development Policy guaranteeing access to social development programmes and equality of opportunities and overcoming discrimination and social exclusion under the principle of respect for diversity, which includes recognition in gender terms. The Federal Act to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination (vi) contains positive and compensatory measures (which are not considered discriminatory) in favour of equality of opportunities for women and children; and it calls for the creation of the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination, tasked with proposing and evaluating the National Programme for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination.

In April 2003, a bill was submitted, amending various Planning Act articles and the Statistical and Geographical Information Act, in order to develop Federal Civil Service (APF) plans in the design of public policies, in which the gender perspective is seen as a tool and integral part of the content.

In addition, the amendments to the Planning Act and the Statistical and Geographical Information Act submitted on 18 November 2003 aim to create gender-sensitive demographic policies and ensure that national planning applies gender equity criteria.

In January 2004, the Official Mexican Regulations on Family Planning Services NOM-005-SSA2-1993 (vii) were amended to guarantee women the right to decide freely on reproductive health issues, giving guidance on the use of the various methods of contraception.

As regards the upholding the right to a life free from violence, the federal states have legislation in place to prevent and deal with situations of domestic violence. The Act on the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (viii) was passed in 2000. Reforms are also pending in Congress to reconcile the working hours of working mothers with the school hours of their children; to protect the rights of children and adolescents on issues of sex education; and to support parents in the childcare system.

The National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples has its own legal instrument: the Act for the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (ix), which lays down principles governing public activities for the comprehensive and sustainable development of indigenous peoples and communities and refers specifically to inclusion of the gender perspective in APF policies, programmes and activities.

The most significant government initiatives in terms of parliamentary debate relate to the issue of women homicides in Ciudad Juarez, which have led to the creation of the Commission for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women in Ciudad Juarez (x), the Mixed Agency for Dealing with Murders of Women in Ciudad Juarez (xi), the Special Commissions for the Investigation of Murders of Women in Ciudad Juarez, in both chambers of the Congress of the

Union, and the inclusion of a budgetary item in the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic (xii) for investigation to clarify the murders and disappearances of women throughout the country.

On 26 April 2004, the Government sent a reform bill to Congress that raises human rights protection to constitutional rank and makes all civil servants responsible for upholding it. The law also makes it compulsory to provide education with a gender perspective. Also awaiting approval in the Chamber of Deputies are amendment initiatives for various articles of the Constitution of the United Mexican States on labour issues, together with bills to amend the Social Security Act and the Federal Labour Act,

On the issue of budgets with a gender perspective, article 55 of the Rules of Operation of the 2004 Federation Expenditure Budget (PEF), instructs government bodies to include outcome indicators with a sex- and age-group breakdown when evaluating their projects. It also establishes that equitable and non-discriminatory access to the benefits of the various programmes must be guaranteed to women and indigenous people.

In terms of dissemination, the campaigns carried out included various media campaigns aimed at eliminating stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes, and the prevention and eradication of domestic violence; campaigns to Combat Child Abuse in Central America and Mexico; campaigns promoting the importance of domestic work and its inclusion in national accounts, and the need for a fair division of family chores; and a campaign in indigenous languages to eradicate violence.

Nicaragua

Overview

The goals established in the Millennium Summit reflect Nicaragua's commitment to raise living standards for all its citizens. Accordingly, in coordination with various civil society groups, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the national mechanism for the advancement of women designed initiatives for inclusion in the National Development Plan. As a result, the governance sector recognized the need to develop a national gender equity programme. In October 2003, the Government officially unveiled proposals for a National Development Plan (PND), setting out its vision of the country for 2008 and 2028. This is currently being validated by the various representative sectors in the country.

Following a joint initiative by the national mechanism for the advancement of women and the country's leading statistical institution (the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses), Nicaragua now has a system of gender statistics (containing 108 indicators).

Progress has been made in overcoming gender discrimination in the education sector. First and foremost in this regard is the National Education Plan 2001-2015, which is intended to mark out fundamental trends in the national education system. The gender perspective the problem of violence have been incorporated into education curricula as cross-cutting issues at the various education levels, with a view to eliminating stereotypes, and training has been provided to teachers. Although Nicaragua has made progress on the road toward universal primary education, the coverage and level of knowledge needed for secondary school life remain sparse, as do the coverage and demand for technical education.

The Supreme Court has made progress in incorporating the gender perspective into its Global Operational Planning (2003-2007), the aims of which include: formulation of a gender policy;

gender mainstreaming in legal training; and promotion of gender equity among justice system personnel. The National Gender Commission of the Nicaraguan Judiciary has been set up, and a Law School Gender Mainstreaming Programme has been established.

The National Police Force of Nicaragua is making gender mainstreaming a fundamental strategy in its programme to modernize institutional policies and practices. The National Prison System has established the National Gender Advisory Board with its own strategic plan. Since 2003, Nicaragua has a Prison System Act, with a chapter on gender issues.

A National Plan for the Prevention of Intrafamily and Sexual Violence (2001-2006) has been developed, led by the National Commission on Violence against Women, Children and Young Persons, on which the Nicaraguan Institute for Women serves as the executive secretariat.

A citizen participation policy has been developed with the general aim of promoting full exercise of citizenship in the political, social, economic and cultural areas. There is also a decentralization policy that seeks to make the provision of State services more efficient and effective at all levels, based on greater citizen participation and promotion of a culture of shared responsibility. However, women continue to be grossly under-represented in decision-making bodies on policies, the economy and dispute-settlement mechanisms.

Interagency commissions have been strengthened, and significant work has been carried out with NGOs such as the Women's Anti-Violence Network, and the National Coordinator of NGOs Working with Children and Young People.

A start has been made on formulating a national employment policy to enable the Nicaraguan economy to make the most of the nation's human resources. In the health sector, consultations are being held on the 2004-2020 National Health Policy, whose principles include gender equity and equality. Violence has been recognized as a public health problem and is viewed as a cross-cutting issue. A gender profile has been produced for the Nicaraguan economy including the study of value chains.

During the last few years, civil society organizations, in conjunction with the Nicaraguan Institute for Women and the National Assembly, have drafted an equal opportunities bill which currently is being debated.

Paraguay

Overview

Paraguay has made major strides since 1995. The convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women was ratified in 1986. Since the 1990s, equality and non-discrimination against women have been the main fronts of struggle and conquest among women's organizations in Paraguay. As a result, there is now a legal framework that guarantees protection of women's human rights in general; but cultural change has not kept pace with legislative progress.

Another very important step has been the creation of the Women's Bureau of the Office of the President of the Republic (the State body responsible for coordinating policies on gender equality), and its close relationship with women's organizations that constitute a sector of social actors with an agenda to overcome the inequalities faced by women.

Nonetheless, the lack of legal regulation means that there are no valid instruments to which recourse can be made when a specific instance of discrimination occurs. Accordingly, a non-discrimination bill has been submitted to the National Parliament and is currently being based on this work, two documents containing anti-discrimination measures have been drawn up.

Puerto Rico

Overview

Puerto Rico stands out as a pioneer in the entire Latin American and Caribbean region in the adoption of government policies on women's rights. It took part in the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and in the preparatory meeting for the Conference organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Mar del Plata, Argentina (1994), and was represented by both governmental and non-governmental delegations. Being a non-self-governing country, it did not have voting rights in those bodies, but that did not prevent it from advancing the cause of women and proposing plans and programmes taking into consideration the gender perspective.

At the time of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Government did not develop a plan of action as such, but it was guided by the Puerto Rican Women's Plan of Action for Equality, Development and Peace, drawn up by a number of the country's nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in 1995, with the Conference in mind, in its eventual development of various national policies.

Achievements to date in the area of raising awareness of the various forms of violence and discrimination against women include:

- the Act establishing the Commission for Women's Affairs within the Office of the Governor (1973);
- the Act declaring 8 March as International Women's Day (1976);
- the Act establishing joint administration of community property by both spouses (1976);
- the Act establishing the first assistance centre for rape victims (1977)
- the Act declaring 25 November as the Day for an End to Violence Against Women (1987);
- the Act prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace (1988);
- the establishment of various shelters for battered women and their children;
- the Domestic Violence Prevention and Intervention Act (1989); and
- the Act eliminating the requirement of corroborating evidence in rape trials.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the women's movement in Puerto Rico was notable for its political activism in helping to work on these measures and getting them adopted as laws.

From 1995 to date, several pieces of legislation have been adopted, and they have become the laws that continue to set policy in the various areas having to do with the protection and advancement of women in Puerto Rico, thus creating better conditions for their development:

Since no national plan of action was drawn up, it is not possible to give a precise answer on this topic, but gender problems have been addressed thanks to the support and the collaborative efforts of the NGOs and the women's movement. The establishment of the Office of the Procurator for Women and its Advisory Council comprising various community representatives has been achieved, and a dialogue and ongoing consultations have been initiated on the different situations that affect the development of women in Puerto Rico.

Dominican Republic

Overview

The Beijing Platform for Action and its clear definition of the four spheres of action determined the direction of the work to be undertaken by the Dominican Republic. The measures adopted by the State may be grouped as follows: (1) development and amendment of legislation, (2) development of administrative structures to make possible the creation of conditions of equality in society and (3) the implementation of specific programmes aimed at meeting the proposed goals.

This linkage is obvious when one takes into consideration the fact that the creation of gender equity units (OEDGs) has made it possible to implement specific programmes in the various State Secretariats where they were set up.

In 1995, the Dominican Republic, through the Department for the Promotion of Women as the focal point for the country's preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, undertook efforts that lead to drafting the document "1995-2001 Platform for Action for the Advancement of Dominican Women", which brings together four policy lines: Empowerment of women; eradication of poverty; education, culture and communications media; and health and violence. Although that document covered the period 1995-2001, various obstacles prevented all of the activities from being carried through during that period. Consequently, that document is taken as the starting point to provide a brief analytical overview of the main achievements in implementing the platform for action with respect to each of the above policy lines.

As regards the empowerment of women, the main achievements since 1995 have been:

- Electoral Acts Nos. 11-95, 12-2000 and 13-2000. The first Act established an affirmative action quota for women, enacting that 25 percent of congressional and municipal appointments should go to women; the second Act increased the quota to 33 percent; and the third made it possible for applications for representative and deputy representative positions to be interchanged.
- The creation of the State Secretariat for Women under Act No. 86-99.
- Increased representation of women on the Supreme Court and in the legal profession.
- The creation of Gender Equity and Development Offices in State Secretariats through Decree No. 974-U1 and the associated regulations.

Among the coordination mechanisms set up to implement this policy line are the Women's Forum of Political Parties of the Dominican Republic, founded on 18 August 1999, the Honorary Senate Committee of Women Advisors, the Chamber-of-Deputies Women's Committee and the Political Training School.

As regards the eradication of poverty, a social policy is set out, based on a development plan calling for economic growth, between now and the year 2015, but as a means of ensuring social development so as to provide better opportunities for the social and economic integration of all Dominicans. Among the main achievements of this policy line is the enactment of Act No. 55-97, amending the Agrarian Reform Act, No. 58-79. That amendment includes women in the land distribution, granting them the same rights as men to lands awarded by agrarian reform. A credit programme has been developed through the Programme for Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (PROMIPYME). PROMIPYME has signed an agreement with the State Secretariat for Women (SEM) through which it undertakes to fund and provide technical assistance to all micro- and small enterprises organised by SEM at the national level.

As regards education, culture and communications media, and particularly the situation of Dominican women in education, the goal that was set by the Fourth Conference for the year 2000 was to ensure that 80 percent of all children had completed their primary-school education. In 2002, the illiteracy rate among women 15 and up was 12.2 percent according to the 2003 Population and Health Census (ENDESA). However, according to UNESCO data, the illiteracy rate fell, between 1990 and 2000, by 22.38 percent, from 21 percent to 16.3 percent.

Among the important achievements in the educational area is the approval of the General Education Act, No. 66-97, which, in article 4, defines gender discrimination as a bar to the enjoyment of every human being's right to education; and gender mainstreaming in the 2003-2012 strategic education development plan. The structure of the State Secretariat of Education includes EDUC-MUJER, a unit that succeeded in disaggregating educational statistics by genders for most of its indicators.

As regards health and education, the main achievements of this policy include:

- Act No. 24-97 on Intrafamily Violence
- Decree No. 32-01 creating the Presidential Council on AIDS
- General Health Act No. 42-01
- Act No. 87-01 creating the Dominican Social Security System
- A fair quota for participation in rural internships and managerial positions for women doctors in the health sector
- Act No. 136-03 on the Protection of Children and Adolescents
- Act No. 137-03 on the Illicit Traffic in Persons

Among the mechanisms established to follow up and coordinate the efforts surrounding these Acts are the Plan for Action on Violence against Women, the National Model for Care regarding Intrafamily Violence, national standards for dealing with violence in the health sector; the creation of local networks; and the establishment of the National Commission for the Prevention of Intrafamily Violence (CONAPLUVI).

Suriname

Overview

Taking into consideration the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Government of Suriname drew up a priority plan entitled "The Integral Gender Action Plan 2000-2005". The priority areas under that plan are:

- Human Rights of Women
- Women, Poverty and the Economy
- Violence against Women
- Gender and Education
- Women and Health

The commitment of units in the various ministries has been sought to monitor the plan and follow up on its activities. The Ministry of Home Affairs is primarily responsible for its implementation.

A research has been carried out to gain insight in gender inequality regarding participation of girls and boys in education.

In 2001, the Ministry of Home Affairs established a Commission responsible for preparing draft amendments to the national legislation with a view to gender mainstreaming and to establishing standards and mechanisms for the punishment and eradication of violence against women.

The Government has ensured the promotion of the development of public policies aimed at social equity and gender equality, and encouraged structural changes and amendments to the legislation with a view to eliminating discriminatory practices.

The main legislative achievements of the Republic of Suriname over the past decade are:

- Ratification of the CEDAW convention in March 1993.
- Establishment of a Regional Programme for Dutch-speaking Caribbeans (in Suriname, Aruba and Netherlands Antilles) in May 1996, comprising research which addresses intrafamily violence from a gender perspective.
- Establishment of the National Gender Bureau (NBG) in 1998.
- In 1998, UNIFEM drew up a three-year programme entitled "Women and Sustainable Human Development" in cooperation with the "National Bureau Genderbeleid". Moreover, a Women's Network guide entitled "Overview of Women's Institutions in Suriname" was published.
- Training, awareness raising and skills acquisition on gender issues with a view to changing attitudes that justify discrimination and violence against women.
- Training of civil servants on gender issues, especially by improving their knowledge of the law and of the rights of women.
- Establishment of the Commission for Gender Legislation by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Commission proposed inter alia an amendment to the Penal Code, punishing domestic violence, marital violence, trafficking in persons, sexual harassment in the workplace, and sexual abuse of children. Furthermore, a law on the equal treatment of men and women is in preparation.

Uruguay

Overview

Uruguay has not yet adopted a national plan of action, nor does it have a plan for equal opportunities at the national level. There is, however, a specialized agency, set up in 1991, the National Institute for Women and the Family (INFM). It answers to the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC). Because of its place in the organization chart and other circumstances, its role in promoting gender equity has been limited.

The first Equal Opportunities and Rights Plan was ratified and put into effect in 2002, and advisory councils were established to monitor it by themes. In November 2003, an initial report and evaluation of its implementation was conducted with various social and institutional stakeholders.

The current legislative session has seen the approval of Act No. 17.214 on domestic violence. In 2003, the Government of Uruguay, working jointly with the United Nations, launched a process of dialogue and debate on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The roundtables organized to adapt those goals to national conditions attracted highly qualified and broadly representative participation.

Uruguay has proposed to set itself the following target: "Eliminating gender disparities in employment opportunities and conditions and at public and private decision-making levels". Adoption of this target is expected during the official process of preparing the relevant national document.

In March 2002 the INFM invited NGOs to evaluate the CEDAW Committee's observations on the first report submitted by Uruguay. That evaluation produced proposals for incorporation in a possible national plan. In March 2003, government organizations were asked to prepare input for such a plan, and Women's Offices and Information Centres in the country's various departments were surveyed to this end. Proposals were also received from the departmental legislatures and from specialized non-governmental organizations. The resulting materials are now being systematically compiled and put to consideration by the institutions and individuals participating in those stages.

Policies, programmes and activities at the sectoral level

Forty percent of Uruguayan children are born into the lowest income quintile, where families typically have little education and are mostly headed by women. The "vicious circle of poverty" affects primarily these families: the prevalence of teenage pregnancy means that young women must assume family responsibilities too soon and have little chance to join the labour market. A very effective way of breaking this circle of poverty, which in Uruguay entraps mainly women, is to provide facilities where mothers can leave their children and so pursue their education. A key aspect of the search for equity is thus the encouragement of education.

The National Public Education Administration has been pursuing a gender equality policy for the education system, under which various programmes based on the principle of equity have been launched, promoting universal pre-school facilities for boys and girls from needy families starting at the age of three.

In this context, the Tripartite Commission of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MTSS) has sponsored a number of initiatives to have the Equality Plan effectively adopted. These include the "Programme to Promote Equal Opportunity for Women in Employment and Vocational Training" (PROIMUJER), funded by the Workforce Adjustment Fund through the National Employment Board and implemented with technical support from the ILO's Inter-American Research and Documentation Centre on Vocational Training (CINTERFOR). Moreover, the National Nutrition Institute (INDA), under MTSS authority, has a special mother-child component under its National Programme for Nutritional Quality (PNCA), targeted at pregnant women and nursing mothers, as well as infants and pre-schoolers.

The public-private management approach, under which the government delegates powers to specialized NGOs but retains responsibility for the quality and coverage of services, has been particularly successful.

The National Institute for Minors (INAME), which provides services for children and youth, has sponsored many programmes and projects dealing with particularly vulnerable groups from a gender perspective.

In the area of health, there has been progress with legislation for protecting sexual and reproductive rights: the compulsory gynaecological surveillance act; the act on assisted childbirth; the act on prevention of domestic and sexual violence; and the bill on the protection of reproductive health, currently in the process of adoption.

Under the Public Safety Programme, the Ministry of the Interior has developed a sub-programme to address family violence. It is funded by the Inter-American Development Bank, but no domestic funding sources have been secured for its continuation.

There is no salary discrimination between male and female employees of the Uruguayan Government. Nevertheless, the gender perspective is not built into the national budget, particularly at its final stage. It has however been incorporated into certain sectors of Government, at least in specific programmes and proposals.

Venezuela

Overview

Some of the priority lines of action undertaken by the National Government in order to eradicate discrimination and achieve gender equity are:

- Ensuring that men and women living in poverty have access to productive resources (credit, land, education and training, technology, knowledge and information), to public services, and to participation in decision-making.
- Establishing policies, structures, goals and targets that ensure gender equity in decision-making processes; and empower appropriate bodies, especially indigenous women's and community-based organizations.
- Broadening the legal framework on gender equality.
- Guaranteeing the right of indigenous peoples to maintain and develop their identity, culture and interests; and providing them with an environment for social, economic and political participation.
- Guaranteeing to all disabled persons access to work, rehabilitation and other services.
- Promoting policies and changes in the attitudes, structures and laws in order to eliminate discriminatory practices.
- Promoting the exercise of participatory democracy, encouraging education systems, communications media and communities to move towards social integration.

As regards the legal framework, the following pieces of legislation should be noted:

- Employment Organization Act, Title VI
- Act on Equal Opportunities for Women
- Act on Violence against Women and the Family
- Act on Land and Agricultural Development, article 14
- Microfinance Act and Decree instituting the Women's Development Bank
- National Act on Youth, articles 8 and 21.

The Equal Opportunities for Women Act (published on 28 September 1993) is a specific instrument for protection and establishment of the principle of equality between men and women, encompassing equity, employment opportunities, the right to work, remuneration and social security.

Another achievement has been the approval (on 3 September 1998) of the Act on Violence against Women and the Family, which entered into force on 1 April 1999. It establishes violence against women and the family as a crime, defines rights for protected persons and contains provisions on prevention, the treatment of victims, education for aggressors, procedural principles, prevention and assistance policies, National Institute for Women (INAMUJER) functions, the responsibility of State ministries, townships, and care and treatment units for acts of violence against women.

In some of its articles, the Land and Agricultural Development Act (published in November 2001) makes direct reference to female tenant farmers as beneficiaries of its provisions and confers

benefits on women heads of household, who thereby are guaranteed a special pre-and post-natal food subsidy by the Rural Development Institute.

The National Act on Youth, published in March 2002, establishes the Duties and Rights of Young People, stipulating that the State, society and the family shall provide means to guarantee full involvement of young people in decision-making in public life and carry out educational activities to strengthen pluralist coexistence. It also contains articles establishing that young persons have a right to information and education on sexual and reproductive health.

Despite the absence of a gender-based budget at national level, social policies targeting excluded population groups have been developed since 1999.

INAMUJER is a government agency whose entire budget - which has increased in recent years - is devoted to the enhancement of women's rights.

Various NGOs are registered with INAMUJER and with them it coordinates dissemination and training activities. The institute has also established "INAMUJER meeting points", grassroots mechanisms that operate as liaison centres between communities and the government machinery.

Part II

Progress in implementing measures addressing the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the further initiatives and activities identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Points of convergence

In pursuing gender mainstreaming objectives through policies and programmes for the advancement of women in all areas and for the recognition of their contribution to the economy, social activity, culture, political representation and leadership, the coordination and follow-up of activities under the Platform for Action for Women have been a top priority. But the ultimate aim lies beyond recognition: appropriate strategies must be deployed in the various areas.

Pursuant to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the reporting States concur that critical areas of concern must be defined. The following such areas must be highlighted:

- I. - Women, economy, poverty and employment
- II. - Women and health
- III. - Women and education
- IV. - Women in power and decision-making
- V. - Women and intrafamily violence.

Specific activities have been developed and planned with a view to identifying and meeting women's needs and concerns in each priority area, adopting new perspectives and incorporating in the programmes and internal policies quality criteria (appropriate indicators, statistics, campaigns and training) as part of institutional activity.

Gender mainstreaming has been a guiding principle in the management and implementation of new measures at the institutional, legislative and legal level, aimed at setting up mechanisms conducive to a more equalitarian participation of women and men in public life and ensuring access to decision-making positions. Work has been done in developing and establishing strategies favourable to formulating gender-based budgets, programming and planning with a view to resource optimization.

Governments concur in stressing that gender policies have contributed to making women's demands visible as a result of international instruments, specific Government measures in the national priority areas and external funding through international cooperation.

The information provided in the documents drafted by the reporting States highlights the importance of training and awareness raising in mustering support for gender equality and equal opportunities. Emphasis is put on establishing international harmonization criteria, introducing methodological guidelines, developing systems for compiling sex-disaggregated statistical data, devising gender indicators in particular areas of interest and setting standards for formulating specific plans and programmes embodying each Government's commitment to gender mainstreaming.

Coordinated and joint work, involving the States, governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and especially civil society is called for with a view to building more representative democracies.

Gender policies, however, despite significant progress, have not eliminated gender inequities and inequalities nor ensured full government accountability. Persisting resistance of socio-cultural attitudes to change necessitates the dialogue required for taking relevant decisions. Qualitative and quantitative changes in public management are urgently needed in order to disseminate information on women's rights and concerns and to promote gender equity as a cross-cutting theme.

Organized presentation of the information submitted by the Governments

Argentina

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Within this framework, the following programmes and projects have been implemented by the National Government:

- Programme for employed heads of household: The key objective of this programme is to provide comprehensive protection for the family, by supplying an income source to the most vulnerable households, while ensuring school attendance by the children of beneficiaries, and the incorporation of unemployed heads of household into formal education or participation in training courses that improve their future labour market prospects. During 2004, the plan functions as a feeder plan for the National Plan for Local Development and Social Economy, which is a system designed to support initiatives for socio-economic development at the local level, aimed in particular at low income sectors. The National Women's Council (CNM) and the Rural Women Project of the Department of Agricultural Development have formulated a joint programme to train rural and indigenous women in how to start up productive projects.
- Rural women project: Under the Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Agricultural Development, this project aims to incorporate the issue of rural women into the public agenda, to increase the visibility of rural women as active social and political participants who have the potential and capacity to contribute towards the design and implementation of policies targeted at the sector. The National Women's Council and the Rural Women Project of the Department of Agricultural Development have formulated a joint programme to train rural and indigenous women in how to start up productive projects.
- National women-, equity- and work-programme (MET): Run by CNM, this programme generally aims at promoting, from the perspective of gender equity and equal opportunities, the development of women's capacities and attitudes with a view to improving their position in the labour market.

The following points should also be noted:

- The year 2002 marked a turning point in the deterioration of working conditions among the population. Jobs and unemployment levels recovered slightly in 2003 from the previous year, and in some cases exceeded 2001 levels. At present, 46 percent of women work in the informal sector of the economy, which is slightly lower than the percentage for men.
- Among employed women, wage-earners accounted for 79 percent, compared to 67 percent in the case of men. However, 55 percent of wage-earning women receive either no social benefits at all or only partial benefits.
- Most women (70 percent) perform unskilled jobs, mainly employed in domestic service, teaching, social services and health care, the textile industry, other personal services, restaurants and hotels, public administration and the retail trade. Nearly two thirds of women work in these professions.

- The most significant inequalities in the labour market domain include the gap between female and male wages, which widens with the number of years of schooling.

Policies and programmes implemented in the area of employment:

1. Measures taken by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security: Resolution 656 of 2002 provided for the incorporation of the gender perspective as a guiding principle in the design and implementation of all activities relating to employment and vocational and technical guidance.
2. National Women, Equity and Work Programme: The overall objective of this programme is to promote, from the perspective of gender equity and equal opportunities, the development of women's capacities and attitudes with a view to improving their position in the labour market.
3. Training activities provided by the Tripartite Commission on Equal Treatment and Opportunities between Men and Women in the Labour Market.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

- National Programme for Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood
 1. The significance of this programme, which was established by National Act No. 25.673/2003, lies in its emphasis on prevention, free and universal provision of contraceptives, access to information and the quality and scope of sexual and reproductive health services.
- Policies and programmes to prevent and deal with adolescent pregnancy and motherhood
 1. At the national level, a draft law on the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents, which promotes the safeguarding of all the rights recognized by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is in the process of being adopted.
 2. The Government of the City of Buenos Aires has two laws that deal specifically with the rights and needs of adolescents in the area of sexual and reproductive health: Municipal Act No. 114 on the Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents in the City of Buenos Aires and Act No. 418 on Reproductive Health and Responsible Parenthood, which prioritises reproductive health care for adolescents.
 3. One of the stated objectives of National Act No. 25.673 on Sexual Health and Responsible Parenthood is to promote the sexual health of adolescents and ensure that the entire population has access to information, guidance, methods and services in the area of sexual health and responsible parenthood.
- Main activities to prevent HIV/AIDS and STDs
 1. The LUSIDA project for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and STDs was launched in 1997, with activities geared towards large-scale and targeted social communication, and

development of subprojects involving activities of civil society organizations (CSOs) to prevent HIV/AIDS among vulnerable population groups.

2. The main achievements of the programme include making use of CSO networks as the driving force behind its activities; human resource training; the transfer of technology to provincial and municipal programmes; and wider coverage for prevention programmes.
3. At present, the National Programme is continuing the work begun by LUSIDA by participating actively in the development of internationally funded projects and in the country coordinating mechanism for the management of the Global Fund.
4. Public hospitals meet the full cost of testing, care and drugs for women with no social security coverage or prepaid medical care, and they provide infant formula to prevent transmission through breast-feeding. Act No. 25.543, adopted in 2001, on testing for human immunodeficiency virus among all pregnant women, makes it obligatory to offer an HIV test as part of prenatal care.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

- The promotion of women's rights requires giving priority to education.
- The Federal Education Act gave the State prime responsibility for laying down the guidelines of educational policy, including making equal opportunities and possibilities effective, rejecting discrimination of any kind, including discrimination based on gender, and overcoming discriminatory stereotypes in didactic materials. This Act is notable for its use of non-sexist language, and for the coordination of educational policies and of strategies to formulate a comprehensive national educational system, free from discrimination or exclusion.
- A priority in designing education policies is to ensure that students of both sexes enter and remain in school, reducing grade repetition and dropout rates.
- Throughout the country, basic compulsory enrolment applies to all children from 4 to 14 years old. In all provinces, compulsory basic general education and non-compulsory multi-track education is free in State-run, public schools. Formal school attendance, evaluated on the basis of net enrolment rates, is high at the primary level, with no significant differences between the sexes. Rates fall off at the secondary level, where the situation is more favourable for women. This pattern is repeated and intensified at university level, where the gender gap in favour of women is wider still.
- The right of all to education without discrimination based on gender or religion has been incorporated into the common core curriculum. Data from the May 2003 Permanent Household Survey show that just over 12 percent of the population of 25 years of age or older did not complete primary school. At the other extreme, over one fifth gained access to higher or college education. Generally speaking, there are no gender differences, except for the larger proportion of women who have completed higher or college education.
- Another important change introduced in 2004 was ratification of a law obliging all schools in the province of Buenos Aires to provide sex education classes to students in the first year of the

multi-track cycle. The city of Buenos Aires is implementing a plan to maintain school attendance among pupils of both sexes, including mothers/ fathers and pregnant students, in secondary and technical schools.

IV. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

As regards policies and programmes implemented in this area, the following points should be noted:

- CNM has continued to carry out its National Programme of Training, Technical Assistance and Awareness-raising Activities relating to Violence against Women. This programme offers training in the establishment and/or strengthening of interdisciplinary teams throughout the country for the prevention and/or treatment of domestic violence and the establishment of inter-agency and social networks. One aspect of the programme involves entering cases in the Consolidated Domestic Violence Register.
- CNM also operates an inter-institutional network for dealing with violence (RIAVI). Participants include hospital centres and services, the Ministry of Justice and the municipal government of Buenos Aires.
- It should be noted that much remains to be done, including the creation of specialized services to treat female victims of violence in most of the provinces; coordination among the various services (areas of health, violence, women's affairs, security, justice); the operation of networks among NGOs; the establishment of a registration system in various services that would generate well-defined, reliable and comparable data; accessibility to the courts with free legal aid; and greater dissemination of information on the protection of rights. It will also be essential to develop ongoing national campaigns to stop violence against women, and programmes to support and reintegrate female victims of violence.

Barbados

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In Barbados pockets of poverty continue to exist alongside prosperity. More women than men tend to fall below the poverty line. Accordingly the Government established a number programmes to assist persons who are living below the poverty line.

The Poverty Alleviation Bureau was established in October 1998. It operates through the Poverty Eradication Fund and seeks cooperation with government agencies and community groups.

A Poverty Eradication Committee was set up to study the use of, and approve access to, the Poverty Alleviation Fund which was established to assist the most vulnerable social groups.

The Urban Development Commission was established in August 1997. This agency was given the mandate of addressing the needs of Bridgetown and its environments. The agency seeks to eradicate

poverty in the Urban Corridor of Barbados through physical, social and economic programmes aimed at improving the standard of living and quality of life of urban dwellers.

This urban renewal programme is supported by a Poverty Alleviation Programme, the Urban Enterprise Fund (which provides funding and technical assistance to small entrepreneurs in the development of their businesses), the Urban Housing Loan Programme (UHLP, a lending facility providing finance for home construction and associated housing purposes) and the Transfer of Titles Programmes (which assist dwellers in urban tenancies to purchase the lots they occupy by subsidizing the market price).

The Government has also established a micro-credit facility Fund Access which provides loans to self employed persons and low-income earners. Other micro-credit facilities are the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation and the Young Entrepreneurs Scheme.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The goal of a gender-sensitive health system is to ensure gender mainstreaming in all health-related government policies, programmes and projects. Although a free healthcare scheme for all is in place, its development requires a comprehensive health information system providing gender-specific statistical data.

Health Education Clinics are conducted at all the polyclinics to help increase awareness of disease risk factors and disease prevention and control. There are certain services that target women and adolescent girls, such as the Maternal and Child Health Programme (MCH) and the Family Clinics.

A Cancer Control Project was established in 2002. Ante-natal and post-natal health services and adolescent health programmes have been considered priorities. Raising awareness among Caribbean women in the area of sexual relations, however, has been difficult and has been addressed only recently by the HIV/AIDS Commission through its Women's Campaign. The Barbados Family Planning Association (BUPA) focuses on the issue.

The Government has established the National Commission on HIV/AIDS under the Prime Minister's Office, with a mandate to implement a broad-based programme of prevention and control, especially among vulnerable groups. The main goals of the programme include:

1. Achieving a 50 percent reduction in the mortality rate within three years.
2. Achieving a 50 percent reduction in the rate of new infections within the next five years.
3. Build sustainable institutional arrangements for managing the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The National Commission on HIV/AIDS embarked on a sustained and effective strategy, encompassing education, information and communication, with a view to altering changes in behaviour in an effort to preventing the further spread of HIV infection and reducing discrimination against persons living with the virus. Other agencies collaborating in the implementation of this Campaign are the Ministry of Health, the National Organization of Women, and the Community Development and Welfare Department.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

One of the major obstacles facing persons living in poverty is the access to information and opportunities for education, because many come from social and economic situations that place them at a disadvantage very early in their lives. Education and training are therefore key components of the strategy to combat and eradicate poverty and improve the lives of women and children.

In that context, the Bureau of Gender Affairs has been providing financial and technical support to the Business and Professional Women's Club of Barbados to undertake a self-development training programme for young women living in poverty with a view to equipping them with skills they need to change their social and economic situation.

IV. Women in power and decision-making

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Women's right to equal participation and freedom of assembly and association are guaranteed under the Constitution of Barbados. There are no legal impediments to their participation in the election process and no barriers to their holding office whether in Parliament or elsewhere. Requirements for election to Parliament or appointment to the Senate are not gender-specific, nor are women among the groups that do not qualify under the law. Accordingly, women and men enjoy equal opportunities in regard to representing the Government at the national and international level.

Despite these provisions, women's participation in decision-making in Barbados is still problematic. Women are under-represented in that area.

Equal participation of men and women in decision-making is of key significance in achieving a balance that reflects the composition of Barbadian society, since according to the 2000 Census Report women account for 52 percent of the population of the country. That balance is necessary for strengthening democracy and ensuring its proper functioning.

A number of initiatives have been put in place to facilitate women's participation in public life. Among these was a leadership training programme implemented by the Bureau, in collaboration with the School of Continuing Studies focusing on "Education for Women in Politics". In 1998 the regional NGO, the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) together with the National Organization (NOW) and the Women's Forum of Barbados hosted a two-day roundtable of women in politics

V. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Government through the Bureau of Gender Affairs, has implemented a number of programmes, which aim to combat and eliminate violence against women. They are being conducted at three levels:

1. Elimination of inequalities between men and women.
2. Provision of services for victims and offenders.
3. Provision of funding to women groups to engage in education and support services.

In 1999, the Government established a shelter for battered women in fulfilment of its commitment to provide services to improve the welfare of abused women. In December 1998, the Royal Barbados Police Force set up the Victim Support Group, a non-profit voluntary organization. A National Forum Against Intrafamily Violence was organized in 2002.

Bolivia

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

There is basic recognition of the exclusion of indigenous and rural, mixed-descent (mestizal) and non-indigenous women, living mostly at or below the poverty line and reproducing that situation from one generation to the next. Poverty and social exclusion hinder sustainable development based on mutual recognition and fair distribution between women and men.

In a systemic and comprehensive approach, proposals for boosting the economy are related to expanding the exercise of social and cultural citizenship by issuing identity cards, launching literacy campaigns for adult women, strengthening sexual and reproductive rights, providing health services, preventing, treating and punishing domestic and sexual violence and introducing other improvements that can lead to an increase in women's income. The goal is to achieve a redistribution of the benefits of sustainable development with equity between the sexes and among women, in such a way that women in general, and rural and indigenous women in particular, participate with decision-making powers in natural resource use and management programmes, with legally secured tenure of land and territory and strengthened capacities and income in agriculture, trade, and biodiversity management.

The idea is for rural economic organizations, and especially the women in them, to afford technical assistance and financial capital services, leveraging their own income with venture capital provided by the State in joint responsibility arrangements with associations of municipalities and districts.

In urban areas, the emphasis is on enhancing women employment opportunities by helping the sectors concerned to improve the matching of the supply of the various goods and services with the various national and international components of demand.

The sector of main economic activity comprises agriculture, cattle breeding, and fishing. The second most important sector, with respect to the working population, is wholesale and retail trade. The third is manufacturing, which employs 330,871 workers, of whom 38.45 percent are women. One area of activity (0.36 percent in both periods) with more women than men consists household and domestic services, in which the percentage rose from 10.13 percent to 11.33 percent between 1992 and 2001.

The "Beijing + 5" report points out that unpaid female workers account for 75 percent of the female economically active population (EAP) in rural areas, while the corresponding figure for the male workforce in rural areas is 29.8 percent. Unpaid work with commercial value accounts for 25 percent of all the work done in the Bolivian economy and women perform 66.5 percent of it (baseline data).

According to "Beijing + 5" report data, women in rural areas take part in both traditional small-scale or subsistence agriculture and in the modern agricultural exports sector, where they are employed as

seasonal workers, receiving one quarter of the wages of male heads of household. Even when women are hired on an individual basis, they usually earn half the wages of a man (15).

Statistics show men continuing to garner executive positions in the public administration and in the corporate sector. Currently, 69 percent of executives are men and 31 percent women. There is also discrimination with regard to income, based on gender and ethnic origin. On average, rural women earn half the wages for men. Indigenous women earn less than half the wages of non-indigenous women. Nearly one in four rural households (24.3 percent) is headed by a woman. Of those homes, 24.8 percent are moderately poor, 23.3 percent suffer extreme poverty, and 22.9 percent are excluded from the mainstream economy (UDAPSO, INE, 1994).

Women have to come play a role in some agrarian federations, despite the fact that farmers' organizations are mostly male strongholds due to cultural norms and the fact that only 20 percent of landowners are women. (Bolivia, Five Years after Beijing, 2000 Report, VAGGF).

In the area of credit, private financial services have mushroomed, with the number of financial service offices and branches more than quadrupling between 1995 and 1999, above all in the cities along the central corridor, in areas in which poverty indices are less alarming ("Beijing + 5" report). Credit to women accounts for 58.7 percent of credit in rural and urban areas. Women, however, have access to small loans, most of which are invested in commerce. The large loans are granted to men.

Main obstacles

No gender-disaggregated data are available. As a result, the contributions to the economy of men and women and the impact of economic policies on gender are difficult to assess.

Although some headway has been made with the regulatory framework, gender mainstreaming is still only loosely tied in with Bolivia's national development aspirations and hence only applied on a limited scale. Such a linkage would guarantee the human and financial resources that are permanently siphoned off to deal with competing emergencies and pressures.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In health, policies over the past ten years have accorded priority to primary and preventive health care. The access of the population in general, and women in particular, to information, prevention and treatment is reinforced, by expanding coverage especially in peri-urban areas and improving the quality of health services in rural areas. The policies implemented have aimed to address the high rates of maternal and child mortality, the high fertility rate, and life expectancy for men and women, the emphasis being placed on women, especially those that are poor.

Three health plans have been drawn up during two government terms:

1. The "Plan Vida", or National Plan for a Fast-Track Reduction in Maternal, Perinatal, and Infant Mortality in Bolivia, which aims at halving the mortality rate.

2. The Strategic Health Plan - Combating Poverty with Family and Reproductive Health Medication, Combating Domestic Violence, and Promoting Maternal-Child Health through Basic Health Insurance and the National Mental Health Programme.
3. The National Health Plan included in "Plan Bolivia 2002 - 2007," combined with an expanded Basic Health Insurance in the form of Universal Maternal-Child Insurance.

With respect to HIV/AIDS, the Government has adopted a National Plan, developed by the Ministry of Health, to prevent and combat reproductive tract infections (RTIs), sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS. Steps are being taken to have the State defray the cost of treatment.

Nongovernmental organizations play a key part in dissemination, education, and support for persons living with HIV/AIDS. Awareness campaigns are organized and counselling provided.

Main obstacles

Bolivia has a total population of 8,274,325 inhabitants, of whom 50.16 percent are women. The fertility rate is 4.4 children per women, but varies by region, level of education, and other factors. Among illiterate women the fertility rate is 6.9 children per woman.

The overall death rate per 1,000 live births is 66. Among illiterate mothers, it is 92 deaths per 1,000 live births, a difference linked to the level of education of the mothers and their access to health care. The overall literacy rate for women is 80.65 percent, but female illiteracy is highest in rural areas (37.9 percent).

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The passing of the Educational Reform Act in 1994 marked the beginning of the transformation of Bolivia's school system through a series of pedagogical and curricular, administrative and financial measures, constituting one of the most sustained social policy events in Bolivian history. Under the "equal opportunities" banner, intercultural values and gender equity were intertwined.

Within the general framework of the Educational Reform, educational policy is to include the expansion of opportunities and generation of socio-economically equal conditions for girls, boys, and adolescents. The policy promotes the knowledge needed to overcome discrimination, inequality and the exclusion of indigenous peoples, original inhabitants, tenant farmers, and other groups based on gender or generational considerations.

It is important to note that in schools the gender approach cuts across the entire curriculum.

The cross-cutting theme of Education for Gender Equity highlights three sets of issues to be addressed in the curriculum: identity and self-esteem conditioned by stereotype images of feminine and masculine identities; sexual division of labour, and inequitable allocation of responsibilities between men and women; and historical discrimination against women in the social, political, and scientific areas.

In Bolivia, discrimination against women in the educational sector is not reflected in enrolment, because the rates for males and females are fairly similar (88.3 percent and 85.3 percent,

respectively). Ministerial Resolution No. 457 prohibits the expulsion of pregnant students from the National Educational System, regardless of their marital status.

IV. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Violence in the home is considered a health problem and included as such in national health policies. A law directed specifically against domestic violence has been in force since 1995. There is also an Act on the Protection of the Victims of Crimes against Sexual Freedom

Networks for Addressing and Preventing Intrafamily Violence have been set up to provide comprehensive solutions to the problems of violence. Bolivia's policy for dealing with violence against women or gender-related violence is outlined in specific Plans and includes the promulgation of Act No. 1674 against Family or Domestic Violence.

Comprehensive Legal Services (SLIs) are the decentralized mechanism for implementing the policy against violence and, under the Municipalities Act of 1998, municipal governments are responsible for organizing such services.

According to a study on domestic violence conducted in September 2000 by the Vice-Ministry for Women, seven out of ten women suffer psychological and physical domestic violence three to five times a year and three out of every 10 women suffer psychological and physical violence in their homes with considerable frequency, while nine out of ten women suffer violations of their individual rights by their partner and four out of ten women are economically maltreated by their partner (in terms of decisions regarding the handling of family resources). The incidence of violence against women between the ages of 28 and 38 is 75 percent points higher than for men of the same age.

Costa Rica

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Comprehensive Training Programme for Women Heads of Household was instituted by Executive Decree on 13 November 1995 in order to provide prioritized services for the country's most vulnerable groups, including low-income women heads of household. The programme was upgraded from a government policy to a State policy in April 1998, through Act No. 7769 on Services for Women Living in Poverty. Based on this legal framework, the Costa Rican State assumes responsibility for providing services for women living in poverty, especially those who are household heads, through comprehensive, interagency services with a gender perspective.

One of the instruments implemented by this law is the "Women growing together" programme, which aims to "implement a comprehensive set of inter-institutional services with a gender perspective, to serve the needs of women living in poverty. These involve personal and collective strengthening, together with technical and labour-market training to enable them to enter the labour market or productive activity in conditions of equality and equity".

The Trust Fund 73-2002 BICSA-IMASBANACIO is currently in the process of obtaining approval in the framework of Act No. 7769. Establishment of this trust fund should benefit all women living in poverty in Costa Rica, who need credit to consolidate their business ideas, but have been rendered ineligible for bank loans because of their poverty status.

Despite the existence of two programmes targeting women living in poverty ("Building opportunities" "Women growing together"), Costa Rica continues to face a growing phenomenon of "feminization of poverty", in that women are increasingly more exposed to poverty than men. Figures from the Multipurpose Household Survey show how female heads of family display higher percentages of poverty than men, and this difference persisted throughout the 1990s.

A quantitative study by the National Institute of Women (Women's Groups: Statistical Differences, June 2003) points out that the most vulnerable groups in the country are young and adolescent girls, emigrant and indigenous women and elder adults.

Another of the initiatives adopted by the current Government has been the National Plan to Overcome Poverty and Strengthen Human Capacities, which posits the need for a comprehensive approach towards poverty reduction. The institutional contribution of INAMU under the above National Plan includes the following two areas of action aimed at ensuring gender equality and equity in overcoming poverty and developing human capacities: institutional capacity building for gender equality and equity, in order to put the Costa Rican State in a position to effectively respond to the requirements of the female population in all its diversity; and citizen participation by women in the 2002-2006 Plan.

Based on the agreement between the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the National Institute of Women, which was in force from 2000 to 2002, a Strategic Gender Equity Plan was prepared and successfully executed, paving the way to address the labour rights that the Costa Rican State has not yet succeeded in securing for women.

The agreement allowed for the creation of a Gender Equity Unit, a mechanism which, in conjunction with INAMU, succeeded in extending the lifetime of the Strategic Gender Equity Plan for 2003-2006, incorporated in the ministry's institutional planning with its own budget.

The Gender Equity Unit is responsible for coordinating the plan, with direct and constant assistance from the INAMU employment specialist.

The plan has four dimensions: (1) Institutionalization and strengthening of the Gender Unit, (2) Promotion and dissemination of women's labour rights, (3) Institutional capacity strengthening (gender training and awareness raising for staff members of both sexes), and (4) Gender mainstreaming in daily institutional affairs and in policies emanating from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MTSS). In addition, a Presidential Directive is being processed that aims to cover all ministries and autonomous bodies in the executive branch of government.

In order to bring adult women, pregnant teenagers and mothers living in poverty into productive activity, two nationwide interagency programmes were created by law. The two programmes aim to strengthen women's personal and social resources, in order to enhance their entry into the labour market and/or education under conditions of equality and equity. They also promote various initiatives aimed at guaranteeing effective access for women to, inter alia, technical training, employment, credit and health.

Since 2001, the Women's Entrepreneurship Commission has been operating under INAMU leadership, as an interagency mechanism promoting business ideas and projects to enable women to improve their conditions of life, particularly in rural areas.

Main obstacles

- Invisibility of women as productive subjects and actors in economic and social development, which excludes them from access to productive resources, education and technical training, health and social security.
- Limited policies for addressing the problem of poverty among rural women, and low social security coverage.
- Lack of an employment policy in Costa Rica.
- Shortfalls in terms of productive opportunities, financing, employment, availability, goods, services and technology.
- Persisting social perception of men as the chief providers.

Challenges

- Address problems facing rural women producers in their business activities. For this purpose social security and training extension programmes need to be created, along with real access to financing sources. These activities should be implemented while recognizing the diversities that exist among women.
- Enhance the productive and entrepreneurial capacity of women, including those from rural areas. Women's access to capital, land, credit, technical assistance, technology and technical training should be guaranteed.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Progress made in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in relation to women's health has stressed two aspects: promotion of the right to sexual and reproductive health; and review of the comprehensive health care model for women. Various efforts have been directed to this end:

- Sexual and reproductive health has been included in the 2003-2006 National Health Policy.
- The General Health Act is currently being revised from a gender perspective. A special chapter on sexual and reproductive rights has been prepared for inclusion.
- INAMU participation was achieved in the inter-sectoral commission that is revising the disability, old-age and survivor pension scheme of the Costa Rican social security system, which includes a list of problems prioritized by women relating to their access to social insurance. The aim is to influence public policy formulation in relation to social security for women, taking account of their diversity, and to facilitate women's access to social security systems under conditions of equality.
- A technical document was prepared with representatives from government institutions and NGOs, on conceptual and legal aspects relating to emergency contraception.

Main obstacles

- The current healthcare model stresses reproductive health and does not respond to women's gender interests.
- Care quality is deficient.

- The management of health data reflects the concept of disease, and is not consistent with a comprehensive health care model.

Challenges

- Implementing the women's health care model in all of the country's health centres, recognizing diversities.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In the education sector, a strategic action plan was prepared under the title "National Education System. Towards a Culture of Gender Equity". The plan is aimed at promoting equal access for women to services provided by the Ministry of Public Education (MEP), with targeting based on the needs and interests of the female population. Since 2000, INAMU has provided advisory services for incorporating the gender perspective in analyses, assessments, research and in the various study programmes. INAMU also participates in the Council for Comprehensive Education on Human Sexuality, contributing a gender perspective.

Main obstacles

- Persistence of discriminatory attitudes and practices in the education system, and among families and communications media.
- Difficulty in mainstreaming the gender perspective.
- Pedagogy that transmits unequal beliefs and practices.
- Barriers facing women entering technical training.
- Scant presence of women in decision-making posts.
- Need to incorporate the gender perspective and the human rights of women in academic study plans and programmes at the higher education level a permanent basis.

Challenge

Establishing a State education policy to eliminate discriminatory practices in the classroom.

IV. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

INAMU has an area that is responsible for overseeing all matters relating to gender violence. Its mission is to stimulate and promote the development of State public policy to prevent and eradicate gender violence, through interagency and sectoral coordination. One of its priority functions is to establish strategic mechanisms to consolidate the National System for Care and Prevention of Intrafamily Violence as a State policy.

Main advances achieved by INAMU

- Change of legal status of the National Institute of Women, giving it authority to provide leadership on public policies for gender equity.

- Creation of an employment area in INAMU, specializing in gender violence, with a corresponding allocation of human and financial resources.
- The commitment obtained from the President of the Republic with the National System for Care and Prevention of Intrafamily Violence, despite a change of Government.
- The provision and expansion of high-priority specialized services for women affected by domestic violence and their children
- Technical assistance offered to the Monitoring Commission of the National System for Care and Prevention of Intrafamily Violence, to fulfil the functions of leadership and evaluation of public policy on intrafamily violence. In addition, advisory services are offered to commissions or institutional mechanisms dealing with the problem of intrafamily violence in the various institutions and organizations participating in the national system, depending on the capacities of technical staff.
- Management and approval of external cooperation projects with the Fundación Mundo Solidario - Phillips Morris and the Organization of American States, which provided funding for inter-learning processes with justice sector and police workers, and to upgrade equipment in the intrafamily violence area.
- Promotion and establishment of 14 new local networks for care and prevention of intrafamily violence and the holding of two national-level meetings.
- Conduct of training activities aimed at building capacities to implement public policy on intrafamily violence and training of legal advisers in intrafamily violence.
- Dissemination of information on services for care and prevention of domestic violence.
- Technical assistance provided to staff from the Municipal Women's Offices.
- Inauguration of a supervision group for cases of violence, as a continuous training service in the gender violence area.
- Compilation and systemization of information on domestic violence generated by INAMU and dissemination thereof in the media.
- Formulation of rules for technical supervision of care services in intrafamily violence situations.
- Active participation in formulation of the legislative bill criminalizing violence against women, and in political negotiation to have it included on the legislative agenda.
- Facilitation of an inter-institutional technical commission responsible for the design and validation of a model for dealing with adult offenders.

Main challenges

- Keeping the issue of domestic violence on the public agenda, through activities undertaken in the five intervention areas of the National System of Care and Prevention of Intrafamily Violence: prevention, promotion, detection, care and inter-learning.
- Maintaining and expanding political support for public policy on domestic violence, from the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government, in terms of:
 - Increasing investment in services of care and prevention of violence, ensuring their inclusion in annual institutional operating plans, so that they can be evaluated and receive the corresponding resource allocation.
 - Strengthening the legal framework on domestic violence, by approving the law criminalizing violence against women, and the law on the National System of Care and Prevention of Intrafamily Violence.
 - Expanding the coverage of courts specializing in intrafamily violence.
- Increasing resources channelled to the gender violence area, in order to:
 - Facilitate production and application of the National Policy on the Prevention of Intrafamily Violence under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, together with participation by

other competent government and State institutions and other civil society organizations with an interest in this issue.

- Expand services provided by the Women's Delegation.
- Provide technical assistance and monitoring as required by the commissions and mechanisms of the national system.
- Increase the geographic coverage of the local networks for the prevention of intrafamily violence and for providing care when it occurs.
- Provide institutional strengthening for the network of networks.
- Develop the information system on domestic violence with indicators on the evaluation and incidence of public policy.
- Evaluate and document strategies implemented in the framework of public policy on domestic violence: prevention, promotion, detection, care and inter-learning.
- Facilitate and assist in the design and validation of the comprehensive care model.
- Develop, disseminate and implement quality standards for services of care and prevention of intrafamily violence.
- Coordinate the design and development of a research programme to provide foundations for decisions in relation to public policy orientations on intrafamily violence.
- Develop a model of quality control and social oversight of programmes and services provided in care and prevention of intrafamily violence with wide-ranging participation from the community and civil society.
- Improve institutional coordination mechanisms to integrate domestic violence as a cross-cutting area of public policies on gender equity, designed and promoted by INAMU.

Main advances in institutionalization

- Creation of specialized structures or institutions that develop institutional capabilities for care and prevention of violence; for example, the Comprehensive Care Programme for Intrafamily Violence (PAIVIF), the Health Sector Directive Council and the Gender Violence Area of the National Institute of Women.
- Expansion of local networks for the care and prevention of domestic violence with participation by government institutions, along with women's and other social organizations which coordinate their efforts and resources to provide services for care and prevention of violence.
- International cooperation support for activities promoted by the system, specifically involving Canada, the Organization of American States, the Pan American Health Organization, and the Fundación Mundo Solidario - Phillips Morris.
- Coordination of the activities of the various institutions in programmatic instruments such as the annual system operating plan.
- Generation of specific initiatives to expand and improve coverage of services on domestic violence; for example, the conceptual and programmatic framework for providing services for children and adolescents affected by intrafamily violence; and support for the project to criminalize violence against women.
- Progress on record-keeping to be applied in cases of violence, especially in relation to health and education.
- Expansion of services in terms of geographic and population coverage
- In the judiciary, operation of specialized courts dealing with intrafamily violence.
- Increase of training and awareness-raising activities for staff working in care and prevention of violence in the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Costa Rican Social Security Fund, the Ministry of Public Security and the judiciary.

Main obstacles

Urgent needs of the National System for Care and Prevention of Intrafamily Violence:

- Regulation of the National System through a law providing for a Technical Secretariat attached to the INAMU Gender Violence area, together with a Services Comptroller and a Permanent Evaluation and Monitoring Commission, with provision of the necessary budget to guarantee fulfilment of the functions assigned to the system.
- Establishment of an information system on intrafamily violence with the capacity to accredit information generated by the agencies and organizations participating in the system on the performance and impact of their work.
- Design and implementation of a research programme providing knowledge for developing public policy on intrafamily violence.
- Increase of prevention and care services in order to expand the coverage of mechanisms providing specialized group care and decentralizing of those services.
- Expansion of the Network of Municipal and Ministerial Women's Offices and Gender Units, and strengthen their technical capabilities on intrafamily violence.
- Formulation and implementation of a policy for the prevention of intrafamily violence under the leadership of the Ministry of Public Education, and with active participation by the Minister of Justice, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, the National Youth Movement, the National Children's Office, the National Institute of Women and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
- Development of a wide-ranging social communication strategy to keep the issue of intrafamily violence on the public agenda.
- Allocation of government resources to fund awareness-raising and education campaigns.
- Adoption of the draft law on the Criminalization of Violence against Women.
- Preparation of a contingency plan, with a view to institutionalization, that obliges the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Labour, INA, IMAS and INAMU in the short run to link up the services they provide to ensure that persons affected by violence have effective access to support resources.

Cuba

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The employment policy implemented includes plans and programmes of direct benefit to women, not only by providing them with ever expanding opportunities for employment but also by facilitating access to education and training designed to enable them to obtain better jobs and promotion to managerial positions. The national female labour force has tended to increase steadily and now amounts to 44.9 percent of the total labour force in the public sector, which provides most of the jobs in Cuba. In Cuba there is a trend towards the feminization of the technical workforce: women make up 66.4 percent of the total in this category, occupying high-level positions in science, technology and the professions. Women have played a prominent role in science and technology during the five-year period. This highly qualified workforce today makes up 51.3 percent of the total number of science system workers and 56.8 percent of technical and professional personnel. The number of women research workers is rising and they now account for 48 percent of the total.

Under Act No. 48 (the Labour Code), working women enjoy rights that improve their quality of life, particularly entitlement to social security benefits on retiring, falling ill or becoming disabled or

otherwise incapable of working. The right to health and safety protection in the workplace, including protection of the reproductive function, is another feature of Cuba's labour legislation.

The Labour Code and the wages system ensure compliance with the Equal Remuneration Convention ratified on 13 January 1954.

One of the existing social programmes provides for assistance for all working mothers with severely disabled children requiring constant care.

There are women's employment committees, established in the 1980s. Chaired by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, they include representatives of the Cuban Trade Union Federation and the Federation of Cuban Women.

The National Employment Programme gives priority to the recruitment of women and young people to do the new jobs created. As a result of the action taken, the unemployment rate for women has been reduced to 4 percent.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Health care is free and universal. Comprehensive medical care under the family doctor system has national coverage, taking in 99.2 percent of the population

The low rates of infant and maternal mortality are unquestionable achievements of the Cuban health system, the former having been reduced to 6.3 per 1,000 live births, placing Cuba among the world leaders in this category. Maternal mortality is 41.7 per 100,000 live births.

There are several specialized programmes for women and children whose achievements are reflected in figures and statistics that place Cuba near the top of the table, developed countries included.

Sexual and reproductive health is a priority of the health care system and is regarded as a woman's right.

Abortion is legal and is carried out in medical establishments under safe conditions. In-hospital delivery has a 99.9 percent take-up.

The National Sex Education Programme has national coverage and there is a National Centre in that area.

Prevention programmes have been launched in various areas of specialization, including HIV/AIDS. With 0.02 percent of seropositives, Cuba is one of the countries with the lowest infection rates.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The education plans provide for non-sexist education. There is close cooperation between teaching institutions and organizations to ensure that the school-family-community system works to instil a comprehensive general culture. Only 2 percent of the population of Cuba is still illiterate. The rate of women in that group is 39.6 percent. Through the adult education subsystem, the Ministry of Education gives priority to the provision of educational facilities for women with various levels of schooling.

The Alternative Community Programmes, which have been designed as an alternative education, are organized on the basis of the needs and interests of the participants. Various study options are offered on equal terms for those living in both urban and inaccessible rural areas, by facilitating the opening of classrooms for undereducated women, mainly housewives.

The school drop-out rate continues to decline thanks to the measures taken to strengthen the educational work and functioning of the institutions and to improve the curricula and, within this framework, the efforts to ensure a non-sexist education aimed at adolescents, young people and families.

There are two education channels with regular programming designed for students and the general public.

The Cuban Women's Federation (FMC) counselling centres and the women's affairs departments of the higher education centres undertake various educational and advisory activities aimed at the family in the community.

Public welfare campaigns using various media have prioritized the issues of responsible parenthood, addressing topics such as non-violence, sex education, preventive measures etc.

IV. Women in power and decision-making

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The comprehensive female promotion strategy calls for the participation of all the State agencies and all organizations and institutions in its implementation. This objective meshes in with the tasks and functions of the Women's Employment Committees, which systematically evaluate the representation of women, their access to reserve lists at every level, and the obstacles to their progress.

Since 1996 there has been steady progress in the promotion of women to managerial posts in the civil state sector. In 1996 women managers accounted for 30.1 percent of the national total, in 1998 the figure was 31.1 percent, in 2000 it was 33.3 percent and it is currently 34.5 percent, the highest level so far achieved. At present, there are six women ministers, in charge of the Ministries of Science, Technology and Environment, Domestic Trade, Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation, Audit and Inspection, Light Industry, and Finances and Prices. In 1995, there were 12 women deputy ministers, whereas now there are 33 and in recent years the appointments have been diversified to include what, for women, are non-traditional departments such as the Ministries of the Iron and Steel and Mechanical Engineering Industry, Information Technology and Communications, Transport, Construction, Agriculture and Civil Aviation.

Main obstacles

Although the achievements are unquestionable and the indicators outstanding, the health care sector faces difficulties associated with the main obstacle, namely, the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the Government of the United States, which is preventing the full development of our plans. These difficulties include restrictions on the purchase of drugs and products manufactured or patented in that country that would improve the standard of health of women and the population in general.

Chile

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In the last decade Chile has succeeded in reducing its poverty levels significantly: between 1990 and 2000, the total poverty rate was cut almost in half, from 38.6 percent to 20.6 percent. At the same time, female poverty declined from 39.3 percent to 20.8 percent (16). This positive record in reducing poverty can be attributed to a combination of sustained economic growth and social policies targeted at the most vulnerable population groups. Despite this progress, the incidence of poverty remains higher among women than among men, and is greater in rural than in urban areas.

The measures and programmes adopted over the past 10 years include: the Training-for-Employment Programme for Women on Low Incomes, with preference for women heads of households, which was launched in 1992 and was coordinated by SERNAM until 2001.

This initiative followed an innovative model of intervention that was decentralized, participatory and comprehensive and addressed issues relating to occupational training, support for independent workers, adult education, child care, health and justice. During its years of implementation, this programme was conducted in 103 communes throughout the country, under agreements with the municipalities, and provided benefits to some 70,000 women.

In the countryside, the Red Prorural network was established in 1998. An institutional network, it embraces various government bodies and includes political and technical participation at the national, regional and local level (17).

The comprehensive social protection scheme for the 225,000 poorest families in Chile - "Sistema Chile Solidario, 2002-2005" - was launched in 2002 to help families suffering from social and economic exclusion. It is coordinated by the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation. The system's objectives are to provide comprehensive support for the families, in keeping with the multiple dimensions of their situation; and to consolidate public services for these families into a coherent and coordinated system. The system represents a significant effort at coordinating and integrating existing policies, programmes, benefits and services, and at setting up permanent national and local networks, as well as identifying families with the greatest social and economic vulnerability.

While it is true that Chile has already met the millennium goal for reducing poverty, ahead of the target date (2015), one of the Government's principal challenges is to eradicate poverty, especially of the most extreme form, the majority of whose victims are women (18). Accordingly, SERNAM is working with the "Sistema Chile Solidario" to develop a programme for extremely poor young women who are heads of household.

Women make an important contribution to the economy of Chile both through paid employment and through unremunerated work. The female participation rate in the labour market rose from 28 percent in 1992 to 36 percent in 2002 (19). There has been an increase with regard to all age groups, but the rate (50 percent) is particularly notable among women of reproductive age, between 25 and 34 years, reflecting a 13-percentage point rise during the period. Yet there are significant disparities in the participation rate among the various household non-salary income quintiles.

Since 2000 SERNAM has stepped up the pace of its work with employers in general, and with certain productive sectors in particular, with the objective of ending gender-based occupational discrimination. It has developed a strategy for mainstreaming the gender perspective in the country's major agricultural business organizations (20) through the Public-Private Committee on Seasonal Farm Work. Special commissions have been established dealing with occupational health (21), working conditions, childcare, pesticides and occupational training, under the responsibility of various ministries and public agencies.

SERNAM has taken a number of steps, together with other government bodies responsible for employment and productive development, to promote labour force participation by female heads of household. These include the Employment Generation Programmes, Childcare Centres for Women Seasonal Workers and an activity on reconciling family and vocational life for women and men.

SERNAM is developing a programme for 2004-2006 to improve female participation in the workforce, particularly for women living in poverty.

SERNAM worked with the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation (MIDEPLAN), the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, FOSIS and SENCE (National Training and Employment Service) on a Pilot Programme for Self-Employed Workers, aimed at preparing instructors to provide independent work training for women who were enrolled in the Female Heads of Household Programme until 2001.

Action has also been taken to publicize ILO Convention No. 156 and Recommendation No. 165, both of which Chile has signed (22), the importance that reconciling family and working life holds for the quality of life and for the productivity and the working climate of businesses.

A series of amendments to the Labour Code (23) have been promulgated to this end.

In August 2002, Act No. 17.949 (24) for facilitating the creation of small family enterprises by reducing regulatory restrictions and requirements. Since micro and small enterprises generate more than 85 percent of national employment, this law has been very important for revitalizing the country's economy.

The main challenge in the economic area is to improve and increase participation by urban and rural women in economic activity, whether as employees or self-employed workers.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Chile's public health indicators have unproved. Among other aspects, there has been a steady decline in child mortality and maternal mortality rates in recent decades maternal mortality in fact

fell by approximately 50 percent between 1990 and 2000, bringing the country near to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In May 2000 a draft bill was sent to Congress to establish the "Universal Access with Explicit Guarantees" scheme (AUGE), as a comprehensive health system that is part of a series of health reform laws. The AUGE bill, also known as the "Health Guarantees Regime", recognizes the universal right to health, and is intended explicitly to ensure comprehensive attention to health needs. As part of the health reform process, a draft Law on Health Rights and Duties was prepared in 2000, and is currently under discussion in Congress. Among other things, that bill provides for access without arbitrary discrimination.

The government is currently implementing a policy to encourage communities to introduce sex education in the schools. In 2001 the Ministry of Education prepared a document on "Sex education Policy", intended to promote the incorporation of this topic across the new framework curriculum.

Along the same line, a pilot project called "Toward Responsible Sexuality" is now underway in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the National Youth Institute and the SERNAM. The stress is on promoting social dialogue and serious thinking about the need to develop a healthy and comprehensive approach to sexuality in the individual, the family and community. It is targeted especially at youth.

A draft Law on Sexual and Reproductive Rights, submitted in 2000 by a group of parliamentarians, is currently making its way through Congress. This initiative was sponsored by the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Network and other civil society organizations.

In 2000, by means of a special resolution of the Ministry of Health, new regulations were approved for voluntary sterilization of women and men.

Between 1999 and 2000 work was done on the preparation of a law (25) banning discrimination against persons living with HIV in the workplace, in education, and in health facilities. The principal means of transmission of AIDS (93.8 percent of cases in 2001) is sexual contact.

In 2004, provision was made in the regulations governing public health establishments for emergency contraception for victims of sexual violence. This rule provides that women of reproductive age who have been the victims of rape must be informed about and, if they wish, given access to emergency contraception, thus offering a more expeditious and less onerous route to this method.

Among the main challenges facing the country in this area are those of preventing unwanted pregnancies and high-risk pregnancies. This will mean improving and expanding the coverage of prevention activities in sexual and reproductive health, providing information, education, and access to various and effective means of regulating fertility and preventing sexually transmitted infections for people who need them, regardless of their age and socio-economic condition, with special attention to the younger population.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Chile has made progress in recent years in expanding the coverage and accessibility of education. Women increased their average years of schooling from 8.9 years in 1990 to 9.7 years in 2000 (26). There has been a decline in illiteracy rates among both women and men, especially in the younger generations. Nevertheless, there are some significant disparities by age group, and by area of residence (rural-urban).

Mention should be made of the "High School for All" programme to increase the school retention rate. This programme recognizes that the reasons for dropping out of school are not the same for young men and women, and it is pursuing differentiated strategies to address this problem.

A significant step forward during this period was the 2000 amendment to Act No. 18,962, the Organic Constitutional Law on Teaching (LOGE), which guarantees access to and attendance in educational establishments for all female students who are pregnant or are nursing mothers. Moreover, in August 2000, an additional section was inserted in Article 2 of LOGE to the effect that "pregnancy and maternity shall not constitute an impediment to entering and attending an education establishment at any level".

Another relevant initiative has been the Constitutional amendment that makes 12 years of schooling compulsory (27) and requires the State to guarantee free schooling to this level for all Chileans up to 21 years of age. In order to assist compliance with this law, a "stay in-school subsidy" has been established.

In terms of access to education, all low-income mothers of schoolchildren are eligible for the education completion ("regularization") programme offered by the Ministry, which works primarily to the advantage of women with children in school. By way of concrete example, 65 percent of the persons who took advantage of this programme in 2001 were women.

As part of the educational reform, SERNAM has been working to incorporate the gender focus into the official documents of the Ministry of Education (28) and has developed a series of programmes and projects to incorporate the gender variable into education materials.

These programmes and projects have included the "Education, Culture and Change" project; at the pre-school level, "Growing on the path of emotional development", a project launched in cooperation with the National Kindergartens Board (JUNJI) throughout the country since 1999, the complementary pilot project "Sexuality, gender and emotional development in the education of infants", prepared in 2002 and validated during 2000 for application in 2003; and the "Letters Speak" literacy manual, designed to incorporate the gender perspective into the adult education curriculum. At this time, new courses of study for adult education are being prepared.

Among the pending challenges are those relating to the quality and equity of education. As well, female enrolment in higher education is still segmented in terms of the type of training they seek: women tend to enrol mainly in technical training centres, and only to a lesser extent in university courses, and this has a direct influence on their employment prospects. Moreover, it is necessary to expand the coverage of pre-school and early childhood education in ways that are compatible with the needs of working mothers.

IV. Women in power and decision-making

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Chile has over the last ten years seen an increase in the number of women in appointed public office, as well as in elected positions, yet women are still underrepresented in the country's political and public life.

When it comes to presidentially appointed public office, between 1999 and 2000 there was a sharp rise in the number of women serving as ministers, undersecretaries, regional prefects or governors, and in local government especially, where the percentage of women rose from 10 percent in 1999 to 30 percent in 2000. Chile supported the United Nations Security Council Resolution (S/RES/1325 (2000)) urging Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and the related goal set by the Secretary-General of a 50 percent proportion of female Secretary-General envoys and representatives by 2010.

In terms of affirmative measures, a group of female parliamentarians submitted a draft bill on quotas in 1997, entitled "Draft law amending various legislation in order to promote women's right to participate in national public life" (29).

Mention should be made of the following amendments to existing legislation and legal initiatives (30):

- (1) Act No. 19,611 amending the Constitution of Chile, explicitly establishing equality between men and women.
- (2) Act No. 19,741 amending the law on family abandonment and payment of alimony.
- (3) Act No. 19,688 amending the Constitutional Organic Law on Teaching and confirming the right of access to educational establishments for female students who are pregnant or are nursing mothers.
- (4) Act No. 19,617, amending the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and other legislation relating to the crime of rape.
- (5) Act No. 19,670, extending parental rights for one year to women and men, single or widowed, who declare their intention to adopt a child, pursuant to the provisions of the adoption law.
- (6) Act No. 19,585, the Filiation Law, amending the Civil Code and other legislation with respect to filiation so as to create equal status for all children born in or out of wedlock.
- (7) Act No. 19,711, regulating visiting rights for children in the custody of one of their parents.
- (8) Act No. 19,591 amending the labour code with respect to the protection of maternity.

Main obstacles

The process of ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, signed by the Government of Chile in December 1999, has not yet reached a successful conclusion. The reactivation of the ratification process is pending.

Despite the significant progress made in the legislative field, there are still situations in which women are in an inferior position to men, reflecting the persistence of discriminatory standards in the legal system, and the fact that certain legal initiatives designed to overcome them are still caught up in legislative procedures.

V. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Through the National Office of Women's Affairs, the State of Chile has expressed its responsibility and its commitment to eradicate intrafamily violence. To this end, SERNAM has developed the National Programme for the Prevention of Intrafamily Violence, which operates at the national, regional and local level. Over the last 10 years, SERNAM has succeeded in making family violence an issue on the public agenda.

Over the last decade, SERNAM has focused its efforts on preventing violence and promoting legislative initiatives. In the last three years it has increased the availability of care for victims of intrafamily violence, through implementation of Centres for Comprehensive Care for Victims and Prevention of Intrafamily Violence.

On 27 August 1994 Act No. 19,325 on Intrafamily Violence was promulgated. It encourages filing complaints and provides for mechanisms for protection and punishment. A bill (31) amending Act No. 19,325 on family violence is currently under consideration with a view to overcoming shortcomings in the law currently in force (32). Congress is currently considering a bill on the establishment of family courts.

In 1996, the Government ratified the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belem do Para Convention) (33).

In 1999 the Criminal Code was amended in its provisions on sexual crimes (34), whereby marital rape was criminalized.

A prevalence survey (35) conducted in 2001 by SERNAM found that 50.3 percent of women currently or previously living in a marriage or partnership in the Metropolitan Region had suffered some form of violence at the hands of their partner. The most common form of violence against women is in fact that which occurs within the home, including physical, psychological or sexual abuse.

Criminal procedures are gradually being reformed in Chile to provide for prompt, effective and transparent proceedings.

Over the years and through these initiatives, an institutional network of services (36) has been established to provide specialized support. Still, one of the most important challenges is to coordinate simultaneous measures at various levels and with all stakeholders, which must include civil society as well as state institutions, in order to provide a comprehensive and multidisciplinary response to the victims of such violence.

Dominica

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Attempts are being made to implement programmes promoting women's access to employment under conditions of equal opportunities as well as to occupational training and to technical assistance in various areas for the generation of jobs and income and the creation of new work opportunities. Attempts are also made to promote access to credits provided by financial institutions in the form of microcredits serving to boost production and generate income through the implementation of projects and initiatives. It is necessary to formulate an employment policy and

introduce legislation ensuring the exercise, protection and defence of women's occupational rights, promoting equal economic opportunities between men and women through planning and implementing gender-based affirmative-action measures.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The goal of a gender-sensitive health system is to ensure gender mainstreaming in all health-related government policies, programmes and projects, based essentially on the perspective of comprehensive care at the of community level, at work and in education. The objectives are: strengthening sexual and reproductive rights, providing health services and taking measures of prevention, care and punishment regarding intrafamily and sexual violence. Despite the scarcity of State funds for research, gender-related variables have been partially introduced in the systems of data compilation and analysis in general and on the issues of health in particular and the Department of Statistics has undertaken to produce sex-disaggregated data.

The main objectives for the period 2002-2006 are:

- improved maternal care
- reduced maternal mortality
- reduced infant mortality
- implementation of reproductive health programmes
- implementation of AIDS prevention programmes.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In promoting the rights of women, priority should be given to education. The transformation of the school system should be planned in the form of adopting appropriate pedagogical, curricular, administrative and financial measures combining a cultural and a gender-sensitive. Lack of access to information and of equal opportunities in education is one of the major obstacles encountered.

Ecuador

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The State of Ecuador has prompted some public policy initiatives for the eradication of poverty through bodies responsible for planning and designing the country's social policies, the chief responsible organ being the Social Cabinet.

- CONAMU's development division has devised programmes for implementing economic and labour policies with a gender perspective, as well as mechanisms for coordinating and negotiating inter-sectoral agendas.
- Together with the Technical Advisory Committee of the Inter-ministerial Employment Commission (37), CONAMU organized the Forum on "Employment Policies and Gender" as

an institutionalized vehicle for dialogue and consensus-building, with the participation of State and civil society stakeholders, in connection with the formulation of employment policies with a gender perspective.

- In a Ministerial Agreement signed in January 2003 by the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources and the Ministry of Tourism, the composition and operational rules of the Forum were formalized, the objective being to "promote gender equity by building a technical and political forum to shape government employment policies." This initiative arose out of the ECLAC-GTZ Project "Institutionalization of labour policies with a gender perspective" (Phase I), in which the Ministry of Tourism and CONAMU entered into a partnership aimed at gender mainstreaming in that Ministry and in the policies, programmes and projects of the tourism sector. One of the leitmotifs of the agenda and proposed operating guidelines is the need to bring in technically and politically qualified staff to the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, the Ministry of Tourism, and other institutions responsible for drawing up Ecuador's labour and economic policies.
- A start has also been made on the ILO Project "Gender, poverty and employment" and Phase II of the Project "Labour Policies with a Gender Perspective." Here, it should be pointed out, strategic partnerships have been struck with ECLAC, UNIFEM, and the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses, INEC, with a view to constructing employment and gender indicators.
- The PADEMUR proposal is also a poverty reduction strategy geared to enhancing the quality of life for women in rural areas.

Established by Executive Decree No. 614, published in Official Register 134, of August 3, 2000, the Social Cabinet is the state body charged with consolidating social policy by coordinating the efforts of the Ministries of Social Welfare, Education, Health, Labour, and Housing, jointly with mixed (State and civil-society) autonomous public entities working in this field, such as the National Council for Women (CONAMU), the Council for the Development of Ecuadorian Nationalities and Peoples (CODENPE), the National Council on Disabilities (CONADIS), the National Institute for Children and the Family (INNFA), the Emergency Social Investment Fund (FISE), and the Solidarity Fund. The National Health Council (CONASA) has also been approached. In 2003, the Office of the Vice President of the Republic and the Ministry of Economy and Finance were added to the list with a view to coordinating economic policy and social policy.

- The Social Sector backs the government policy guidelines reflected in the "Human Development Agenda" (AHD), a document that the Social Cabinet uses as a basis for its work. The activities planned by the AHD are aimed at helping families and the State manage the risk and vulnerability factors to which they are exposed. The AHD proposes linking the Government's three - social, economic, and productive - agendas. "At the interface of the three agendas are the strategies needed to reduce poverty and to incorporate hitherto excluded sectors in productive and redistribution-equity circuits." (38)
- In April 2004, CONAMU signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Social Front Technical Secretariat (STFS) on Poverty and Gender. Its aim is to establish the Inter-Institutional Cooperation Framework for gender mainstreaming and comprehensive protection of women's rights in national poverty reduction policies.
- The main specific goals include:
 - Formulating and implementing social protection policies, especially in the Human Development Bond Programme.

- Carrying out a joint action strategy to influence implementation of the Ecuador-Italy debt swap.
 - Building a gender perspective into the draft 2005 budget, including indicators and planning criteria for analyzing the impact of social sector spending on achievement of the gender equity goals established in the Constitution.
 - Increasing the coverage provided by the Free Maternity and Child Care Act, especially in rural areas and along the northern border.
 - Promoting the participation of women in social auditing and monitoring of the Free Maternity and Child Care Act.
 - Conduct a study of the use made of the services and benefits provided under the Free Maternity and Child Care Act.
- Under the Cooperation Agreement signed with ECLAC, CONAMU is currently coordinating a study on "Gender equity and the Human Development Bond Programme". Its purpose is to evaluate the programme from a gender perspective: its coverage, scope, and impact on rights already acquired by women, on their quality of life and access to basic social services and on awareness of the programme by means of ongoing dialogue among governmental and non-governmental players with the active participation of women as the principal beneficiaries.
 - In light of the poverty of women in rural areas and as part of an initiative undertaken by First Ladies of the Region, CONAMU and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) together developed the Programme of Support for Rural Women (PADEMUR), which is designed to promote and support activities aimed at improving the condition and gender status of rural women, with a view to strengthening their participation and role in sustainable development, by means of their social, political, and economic empowerment.
 - With a view to contributing to an improvement in the quality of life of women by means of a credit line to finance projects and initiatives aimed at promoting equal opportunities, eradicating discrimination on grounds of gender and helping to overcome poverty, a pro-women fund, known as the Fondo Promujeres, was established in 2003 through a trust administered by Corporación Financiera Nacional.
 - Rural microfinance training courses have been developed as sub-programmes, with a gender perspective and local credit systems to support rural women's production initiatives and self-management mechanisms under PADEMUR and Fondo Promujeres.
 - Within the PADEMUR framework, studies have also been conducted of women's productive systems and subsystems in three cantons, addressing such topics as use of time, the feminization of poverty, domestic chores, and non-remunerated labour.

Main obstacles

- The chief obstacle has to do with the development model currently in effect, which accords priority to economic growth over people's welfare, with macroeconomic policies in labour, financial, fiscal, and trade matters that, in a context of crisis, have expanded and exacerbated unemployment, underemployment, and poverty, with particularly dire consequences for women.

- Major obstacles have been identified with regard to legislation and administrative practices shaped by a culture of exploitation and discrimination, which perpetuates gender gaps, reproduces and reinforces inequality, and blocks access to and control of financial resources.
- The participation of State and civil society players in activities designed to achieve this goal does not mean that a women's rights and gender equity perspective has been fully incorporated into sector or inter-sectoral policies and programmes. Promotion of women's economic rights has stemmed exclusively from the national body responsible for overseeing gender policies.
- The insufficiency of the fiscal resources allocated in the National Budget to Fondo ProMujeres and the Programme of Support for Rural Women indicates the still only incipient sensitivity of the central government to the situation of women. There is also insufficiency of funds to cover the costs of activities to advance economic and rights and gender issues.
- The lack of resources for gender issue activities prevents appropriate installation of a technical advice system at the local level. Staff at that level needs specialized courses to enable them to advance the process of formulating local government policies with a gender perspective.
- Another hurdle is the unwillingness of the Ministry of Labour to allow consultation and participation of the national authority for gender issues and of civil society in monitoring compliance with international agreements on labour and gender issues.
- Although much effort has been devoted to acquiring strategic information about the status of women and gender relations, there are still not enough statistics available for technical staff or decision-makers of both sexes to draw up plans, agendas, policies, and strategic programmes.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Although 92.6 percent of women of child-bearing age are familiar with some kind of family planning method, only 35.3 percent actually use one to control their fertility. Among married women or those living with their partner, the percentage increases to 56 percent. Just over one quarter (26 percent) of all men with access to contraceptives actually use them, which means that responsibility for family planning is still almost exclusively left to women. Lack of information on sexuality and contraceptive methods increases the number of undesired pregnancies, especially among adolescents and young women.

Major gaps can also be seen in insurance coverage. In 1999, 0.4 percent of women and 4.7 percent of men were covered by private health insurance. National health insurance that year covered 23.9 percent of the actually employed economically active male population (EAP), compared to 6 percent of the female workforce. Another alarming statistic is that 76.2 percent of women and 69 percent of the actually employed economically active (male and female) population had no kind of health insurance at all, whether public or private.

Women's access to sexual and reproductive health care throughout their lives is guaranteed by the Free Maternity and Child Care Act (LMGYAI).

Ecuador now has an HIV/AIDS law. Negotiations on funding treatment drugs, prevention activities and awareness campaigns are under way through a Global Fund project.

With regard to legislation, the Ministry of Public Health and the Congressional Health Commission are working on proposed amendments to the Health Code. One of the core areas addressed by the reforms is sexual and reproductive health.

International cooperation has been a major source of funds for research into the status of women. With the support of several international agencies, work is currently under way on the design and testing of the questionnaires for the national survey on maternal-child health, sexual and reproductive health and the health of children.

Despite the dearth of government funding for research. Greater emphasis is in fact being placed on dissemination of the available statistics on women's health. In most cases, data gathering and analysis systems in general, and those dealing with health issues in particular, now include a breakdown by sex.

As for monitoring of actual compliance with the allocation of government resources to health, it should be pointed out that, while budgetary appropriations have increased each year for implementation of the Free Maternity and Child Care Act, the funds do not always reach the health centres in sufficient quantities or on time.

Main obstacles

Owing to problems in fund transfer mechanisms and delays on the part of funding sources, such as the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Solidarity Fund, the implementation of LMGYAI has not been fully effective.

There is an ongoing debate in Ecuador about who should pay for women's sexual and reproductive health care and basic health care for children under five. One proposal is that women could defray the healthcare costs of their children at that age. The other view is that the flow of reimbursements is irregular and, given the constantly declining budget of the Ministry of Health (MSP), the only solution seems to be to charge directly for services.

As for progress with legislation, the Congressional Commission on Health and the Environment has not been open to - or politically willing to endorse - women's concerns and the gender approach in the Health Code reform process.

Despite major increases in MSP, further effort is needed since it is estimated that a quarter of the population has no access to any kind of health service.

Although information is of key importance in the public policy formulation process, the State has not made research into women's health issues a priority in allocating resources. Ecuador's investment in research is one of the lowest in Latin America.

One of the major national budget constraints is the cost of supervision and monitoring.

The institutionalization of a system for improving sexual and reproductive health care services has been slow subject to shifts in the political will of the authorities in that area.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The figures on women's access to education in the past decade are promising. Although males have a higher school enrolment rate, the attendance rate for females is higher. Despite improvements, there are gender-related aspects of education that are worth noting. One such issue is the double or triple workload of women from an early age.

The illiteracy rate is another important indicator. In 2001, Ecuador's overall illiteracy rate was 8.4 percent. In urban areas, female illiteracy (5.8 percent) was slightly higher than the rate for men (4.6 percent), while in rural areas the difference was substantial: 11.6 percent for men, compared to 16 percent for women (National Statistics and Census Institute, INEC, 2001).

One of the problems detected in the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) with respect to sexual harassment and abuse is the lack of mechanisms for lodging complaints and investigating and punishing offences. The absence of MEC policies to address these issues leads to violation of the rights of the victims of sexual harassment and impunity for the perpetrators. CONAMU has accordingly organized research into mechanisms and procedures that enable the MEC to address recurrent sexual harassment and abuse. The main outcome of this process was the promulgation of the Special Rules of Procedure and Mechanisms for Hearing and Dealing with Sexual Offences in the Educational System contained in Ministerial Agreement No. 4708, signed on December 13, 2002. A plan was also drawn up for activating commissions at each of the Provincial Directorates of Education.

The CONAMU-MEC Inter-Institutional Cooperation Agreement of 1998 established a forum for coordinating activities known as the Pro-Gender Equity Network, aimed at facilitating within the MEC the incorporation of a gender perspective in the national educational policies.

The National Directorate for Professional Advancement (DINAMEP) put forward a joint proposal with CONAMU to incorporate a gender perspective in the Directorate's national teacher training policies.

Main obstacles

Ecuador's social and economic crisis and migration have led to deterioration in the standard of living of the population and brought about, specifically, decline in the school enrolment and attendance rate for girls, although accurate figures on this are hard to come by.

Although the available statistics indicate that adult women need literacy classes, the Government does not consider the issue a priority and, as a result, fails to allocate sufficient funding for proposals to addressing it.

One of the obstacles to getting rid of socially and culturally induced patterns of discrimination is vocational training, which has traditionally ignored - or cultivated - gender bias.

Generally speaking, mid-level management in the education system is still relatively insensitive to gender issues and women's rights. The broad conclusions of a UNICEF study of the subject are that while the education system has not regressed in this regard, no real progress has been made either.

IV. Women in power and decision-making

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The State of Ecuador has acceded to important initiatives of the women's movement aimed at increasing women's participation as candidates in national elections and for senior positions. The Constitution and lower-ranking legislation contain significant provisions designed to promote and increase women's involvement in politics. Nevertheless, there are still substantial gaps.

Women mainly fill local authority positions, particularly in township and city councils. Some women ministers have been appointed under the current government, and were entrusted specifically with the Tourism, Foreign Trade, Foreign Affairs and Education portfolios. However, the participation of women at these decision-making levels is partly due to the high turnover in these positions. Today there are women ministers of Foreign Trade and Tourism.

Article 102 of the 1998 Constitution establishes that the State shall promote and guarantee the equitable participation of women and men as candidates in the popular electoral processes, in policy-setting and decision-making bodies in the area of public affairs, in the administration of justice, in monitoring bodies and in political parties.

The law amending the Elections Act stipulated that at least 30 percent of the candidates on political party lists had to be women, on an alternating and sequential basis.

The Employment Protection Act of 1997 provides for a minimum 20 percent quota for women as presiding judges of higher courts and in other posts relating to the judicial function. However, despite this measure of affirmative discrimination in their favour, women occupy fewer posts in the judiciary than men.

Main obstacles

Women who venture into politics in Ecuador face ingrained cultural prejudices in the political parties and their leaders about women entering the world of politics.

V. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

There are no official national statistics on domestic and gender-related violence against women in Ecuador. Nevertheless, numerous studies indicate that eight out of ten Ecuadorian women have been victims of violence, domestic violence being the most frequent form it takes.

A significant element in the area of legislation is that the country's Criminal Code does not specifically define intrafamily violence (IFV) as a crime, which to some extent implies that IFV is not really regarded as a violation of women's rights. There are no effective mechanisms for safeguarding the physical and emotional integrity of the victims of violence, as the Victims and Witnesses Protection Programme established for that purpose does not have enough funds to enable it to operate.

In the years following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Ecuadorian State managed to set in motion a scheme for institutionalizing government policies on violence.

In 1994 the Women and Family Commissariats were established in response to a demand of the women's movement and legal aid offices in Ecuador. That constituted the first step toward the establishment, coordinated by CONAMU, of Commissariats at the national level.

The promulgation of Act No. 103 on Violence against Women in 1995 meant that the commissariats acquired the legal mechanisms and procedures needed to deal with cases of intrafamily violence.

At a later stage, the National Directorate of Commissariats was established by Ministerial Agreement in March 2000. In February 2002 it became the Directorate for Gender.

Currently, CONAMU provides the Directorate for Gender with technical assistance on issues of violence.

The Inter- Institutional Committee for Supervision of Women's Human Rights was established on March 31, 2004, with the participation of the National Directorate for Gender (DINAGE), the Women's Division of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Attorney General, the National Police, the police force's Office for Women's Rights (ODMU), the Congressional Commission on women's issues, children, youth, and the family, the Centre for the Advancement of Women (CEPAM), the Maria Guare Foundation, the Equity Foundation, the Observatory for a Life Free from Violence, the Ecuadorian Association of Municipal Government Staff (AME), the Ecuadorian Association of Female Municipal Employees (AMUME), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). At the second meeting of the Committee the inclusion of representatives of the National Judiciary Council and the Supreme Court was recommended.

Main obstacles

Legal advice mechanisms need to be placed on a more sustainable footing within local government administrations. Sufficient human and financial resources are essential for sustaining and strengthening these projects, which provide women with legal counselling.

There is lack of training for personnel on issues to do with women's rights, violence, and local government policies, especially at the local level. A major investment therefore has to be made in sensitizing and training both local authorities and technical teams.

Political instability and constant changes of authorities prevent the implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing women's access to justice in general.

El Salvador

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

El Salvador has ratified the international of the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value (No. 100), on employment and occupation (No. 111), which bans discrimination, and on workers with family responsibilities (No. 156), which provides for equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and

women. In the labour area, the Government focuses on areas where women account for most of the labour force, especially customs-free zones.

A system for workplace regulations approval in enterprises has been instituted in order to ensure that their provisions do not include sexist passages which discriminate against women.

Centres of production and women's development have been set up and have started to operate within the country, in cooperation with municipalities and specialized institutions like the Social Investment Fund for Local Development and the Mutual Fund for Salvadoran Families for the Generation of Employment and Income.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In the 1990s, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare started to plan and carry out a process of modernizing the health system, essentially with a view to providing comprehensive care for women throughout their lives. Gender-focused sexual and reproductive health forms one of the central areas of concern in community, industrial and educational health and provides a guiding framework for formulating policies, legislation and standards.

Progress in the area of health includes the following specific achievements:

1. An awareness-raising programme on gender mainstreaming mainly directed at male medical, paramedical and administrative staff.
2. Establishment of the following networks and commissions tackling a wide range of women's health issues: Mental Health, Partnership for HIV/AIDS, Partnership for Sexual and Reproductive Health, National Maternal and Perinatal Mortality Monitoring Committee, and National Cervical Cancer and Invasive Cancer Committee.
3. Incorporation of gender focus in family planning guidelines;
4. Family planning care differentiated according to age group.
5. Implementation of the National Programme to Prevent and Control HIV/AIDS, which led to the adoption of the Act on the Prevention and Control of AIDS-related Infection, whose provisions guarantee the individual social rights of persons living with HIV/AIDS.
6. Establishment of the National Mental Health Council under the auspices of the National Secretariat for the Family and with the support of various ministries and governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Attempts to improve the status of women in the area of education include the following significant initiatives:

The average schooling received by women has grown at an annual rate of 1.7 percent over the last ten years, rising from 4.6 to 5.4 years in 2002. Girl's gross rate of attendance in secondary education increased from 34.3 percent (1992) to 47.8 percent (2002). Women's gross rate of participation in higher education increased from 9.6 percent (1995) to 15.9 percent (2002). This progress has been due to the Government's unremitting efforts in the field of State education

policies, which particularly encourage the active participation of women. Mention should be made of the Basic Literacy Education for Adults Programme (PAEBA, 2003), run by the Ministry of Education of El Salvador; and of training programmes on gender mainstreaming in education, including pedagogical texts used at the nursery and primary education levels.

These efforts have been accompanied by moves to sharpen teachers' awareness of gender focus and equal opportunities and to give them the appropriate training; and by measures to raise awareness of the National Policy on Women among members of the Higher Education Board in order to encourage the revision of the curriculum and textbooks and to prompt more research.

Efforts to boost gender equality in educational processes have also been welcomed by various sectors of private enterprise and the media, as can be seen from the implementation, by the Ministry of Education and the National Secretariat for the Family, of the Girls' Education Project which provided for public information campaigns underscoring the importance of educating girls.

The Education for Life Programme, coordinated by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the National Secretariat for the Family and the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare cooperate, has adopted a cross-cutting approach to the gender perspective in all the formal- and informal-education activities carried out under the programme.

The gender perspective has been incorporated in the teaching materials produced by the Ministry of Education for use in schools from nursery to secondary level.

An Interdepartmental Programme for the Comprehensive Development of Rural and Indigenous Women has been devised and carried out. This programme, which was launched in 2003, takes in education, health, integration in productive work and gender issues.

IV. Women in power and decision-making

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In order to fulfil this aspiration, ISDEMU, together with the executive bodies - the Salvadoran Municipal Development Institute, the Association of Municipalities of the Republic of San Salvador (COMURES) and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) - formulated operational plans which have led to the following achievements:

- An agreement on introducing the gender perspective in municipal councils has been signed with the Salvadoran Municipal Development Institute (ISDEM).
- Technical assistance is provided for drafting of the gender-focused local development policy of the Social Investment Fund for Local Development (FIDSL).
- The TSE is mounting publicity campaigns to persuade women to take part in elections, especially by voting.
- The needs of women in various municipalities of the country are ascertained with a view to offering specific responses and enhancing their status.
- Electoral results have been studied with a view to making a combined institutional effort to increase the number of women elected to public office.

- Technical assistance is provided in the implementation of the gender policy guidelines of the Salvadoran Municipalities' Association.
- Establishment of the Interdepartmental Legal Commission, whose members comprise representatives of the National Secretariat for the Family, the Supreme Court of Justice, family courts, the Procurator General's Office, the National Judicial Council, the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organisation of American States (OAS) and ISDEMU. Its function is to review legal guidelines and to propose reforms promoting gender equity and equality.

IV. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

November 2002 saw the official adoption of the National Plan for Protection against and Prevention of Intrafamily Violence. Its purpose is to ensure the continued coordination of action at the interdepartmental and local level to provide comprehensive care in connection with intrafamily violence; and to strengthen local and community networks in order to contend with that scourge.

The Programme to Improve Family Relations offers comprehensive services covering all kinds of intrafamily violence, cruelty to children and sexual abuse.

The Comprehensive Programme of Fairs for Preventing Domestic Violence is touring every municipality in an effort to raise awareness of the problem of intrafamily violence, so as to prevent and eradicate this type of behaviour in Salvadoran families by encouraging the reporting of instances of brutality.

In 2002, a draft amendment to the Intrafamily Violence Act was revised and submitted for adoption by the Legislative Assembly. ISDEMU shall act as the lead agency for policies, programmes, plans and projects related to the prevention of, and protection against, violence within the family.

Main obstacles

Budgetary monitoring, which should facilitate the inclusion of the gender focus in budgetary variables, is limited.

Guatemala

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The National Unemployment and Income Survey (August-September 2002) showed that women are mainly employed in commerce (30 percent), industry (24.6 percent), community and personal service (20.7 percent), and agriculture 12.3 percent). In general terms, 75.3 percent of working women worked in the informal sector; in addition, 84.1 percent of women lacked any social security coverage. Economic liberalization and technological progress, particularly in communications, have not tended to improve women's living conditions, but only company profits, as, because of the

continuing inequity in education, few women go beyond primary school and obtain a secondary or post-secondary education.

It may also be mentioned that, because of the type of work done by women, they have little access to credit: in 2001, only 32.6 percent of the loans granted by the Rural Development Bank (BANKRURAL) went to women. That fact hinders their development. SEPREM developed and presented to the Ministry of Public Finance a proposal for the incorporation of a gender classifier in the national budget in order to display the amounts allotted to women.

Great efforts are being made by the Ministry of Education, social funds, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Energy and Mines and the First Lady's Social Work Secretariat to improve women's productive capacity, but there is no national programme to maximize the results of all these efforts and avoid duplication.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Regarding the HIV/AIDS problem, the Ministry of Public Health has set up the National Programme for the Prevention and Control of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS, which prevents, monitors, controls and responds to this problem at the national level, though it functions with a limited budget. In 2002, Legislative Agreement No. 317-2000 was promulgated, implementing regulations for the General Act on Combating HIV/AIDS, but it contains no specific provisions for women.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Ministry of Education has set in motion an educational reform involving proposals for curriculum change and the establishment of the Vice-Ministry for Intercultural Bilingual Education.

IV. Women in power and decision-making

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Since 2001, the Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM) seeks to extend the implementation of the goals of national women's affairs policies - addressing the critical areas of concern of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) - at the local level, succeeding in having the new Urban and Rural Development Councils Act specify that SEPREM would be a member of the National Urban and Rural Development Council and of the regional councils. Also, representatives of women's civil society organizations (CSOs) were included in the regional, departmental, municipal and community development councils and gender equity was adopted as one of their guiding principles.

At the same time, SEPREM's involvement in the development of the Municipal Code resulted in the incorporation of a gender perspective, as involvement of the Women's Commissions was made obligatory in the municipalities.

SEPREM has signed an agreement with the Association of South-western Municipalities to advance policy, design and manage projects focused on women, and provide training.

V. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

As regards violence against women, the National Coordinating Office for the Prevention of Intrafamily Violence and Violence against Women (CONAPREVI) has been set up. It is a joint government and civil-society body whose mission is to address the problem of violence against women.

CONAPREVI has formulated a national plan for the prevention and eradication of domestic violence and violence against women (PLANOVI). At the moment the document is being circulated to various social groups.

The Government has undertaken to pass legislation that defines sexual harassment as an offence and considers the fact that it is committed against an indigenous woman to be an aggravating circumstance; and to set up the Office for the Defence of Indigenous Women's Rights and promote the dissemination and strict observance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Main obstacles

Among the factors that hinder progress in this area are extreme poverty, discrimination, weak inter-agency coordination and, most significantly, the limited budgets allocated, which make it difficult to implement the policies and laws developed, and the low level of gender equity awareness among the population in general.

Honduras

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The evolution of the economically active population (EAP) consisting of women workers and of child and juvenile workers provides two important indicators of changes in the labour market. In 2002, women accounted for 51.8 percent of the total labour force required by the national economy for production, and they contributed 33 percent of work in commerce and 94 percent of unpaid domestic labour. But women's entry into the labour market does not mean an improvement in their living conditions: they earn less than men (on average, women earn the equivalent of only 47 percent of what men earn) and in most cases they do not enjoy the benefits provided for under the labour legislation.

Women are concentrated in the labour force in the commercial and personal services branches. Coordinated activities have been carried out by agencies of the governmental and other sectors to overcome the gender inequalities in employment and access to production resources. These measures have led to the following achievements:

1. Inclusion of a "Women and poverty" component in the National Policy for Women and a "Gender equity and equality" component in one of the programme areas of the poverty reduction strategy, together with the identification of objectives, policy measures, and programmes and projects for women in various sectors (39).
2. Conduct of studies based on statistics produced by the National Statistics Institute (40) and availability of a gender-disaggregated employment database and a system of employment indicators.
3. Negotiation with the National Statistics Institute of the inclusion of the modules on "Access to and control of production resources" in the permanent multi-purpose household survey.
4. Formulation of the gender equality policy for agriculture.
5. Drawing up of the first draft of a bill amending the Equal Opportunities for Women Act with a view to expanding the chapter on equal opportunities in employment and social security.
6. Initiative to mainstream gender perspectives in the national budget, with the inclusion of gender aspects in the budget components and measures to raise the awareness of macroeconomists and senior officials in the various ministries, and to establish a non-reimbursable cooperation fund to consolidate and develop a strategy for securing progress towards the formulation of a gender-sensitive budget policy.

Main obstacles

- Persisting discrimination against women in the labour market, which aggravates their poverty by perpetuating inequality in the distribution of opportunities, resources and incomes, as well as in access to jobs and social services.
- Women's scant access to and control of production resources.
- Despite exports diversification and trade liberalization, which open up opportunities for women in the production of goods and services for the external market, persistence of precarious conditions for women: low wages, hard work and long hours, piecework and job instability.
- The fact that some programmes and projects designed to improve women's economic conditions do not include any measures on the release of women from work for childbearing or any monitoring and follow-up arrangements for measuring their effects and impact.
- Although some top -level authorities show interest in having the poverty strategy include projects which will contribute to the economic and political empowerment of women, the projects formulated are focused primarily on women's vulnerability.
- The increasing numbers of girls in the EAP. In the 10-14 age group, girl workers used to account for 18.8 percent of the EAP, as against 81.2 percent for boys; but by 1998 the proportion of girls had increased to 29.4 percent, as against 70.6 percent for boys (41).

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Priorities for the period 2002-2006 relate directly to the health of women and children, including: health protection and promotion; reduction of maternal and infant mortality; reduction of mortality among children under five; and reduction of the risk of transmission of HIV/AIDS. The measures are aimed mainly at improvement of the coverage and the quality and efficiency of the health services and at increased access and equality.

In an effort to give effect to these priorities the Ministry of Health coordinates activities with international agencies and public and private bodies, especially those working for the rights of women, adolescents and children.

Every care and prevention programme has technical components which are executed through the national system of health services, with the participation of organizations of civil society.

Major achievements in gender mainstreaming in the Ministry of Health include: the integration of components on a cross-cutting gender approach in Essential Public Health Function (FESP) No. 5 (Policy development and institution building in the planning and management of public health), in the annual operating plans of the Maternal and Child Department, and in the strategic plan to combat HIV/AIDS 2003-2007.

The Ministry of Health is taking measures to strengthen the comprehensive care of children through the formulation of technical guidelines for the initiative to reduce infant mortality and the consolidation of the comprehensive care strategy for children.

Measures were taken to prevent and combat maternal mortality under the comprehensive care programme for women, including the revision and updating of the standards for the comprehensive care of women to include a gender focus.

The principal achievements in the HIV/AIDS programme included the establishment of the national programme on prevention of the transmission of HIV from mother to child.

Main obstacles

- Where health is concerned, women are still viewed from the standpoint of their reproductive role and not from a comprehensive health perspective.
- Although a start has been made on introducing the policy on a cross-cutting basis, the gender perspective is still lacking in the Ministry of Health to ensure its incorporation in the policies, plans and programmes.
- There are no clear technical policies on abortion as a public health problem, although it remains the second commonest cause of hospital admission nation-wide, a situation which has not changed over the past 20 years.
- Deficits in hospital infrastructure, equipment and supplies.
- Failure to give priority to such matters as mental health, quality of services for women, consolidation of women's self-determination and self-medication, and their empowerment in health and other fields.
- Shortcomings in the functioning of the information system. Statistics are usually not disaggregated by sex and they are published late. The lack of gender indicators on health obstructs the analysis and monitoring of the various health policies, plans and programmes.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Under the National Agreement on Change for Human Development, headed by the National Forum on Convergence (42) and the Education Ministry's action plan and strategy for 2002-2006, the Government has entered into a national commitment to secure application of the existing gender legislation, for example the Domestic Violence Act, the Equal Opportunities for Women Act, and the National Policy for Women.

Relevant achievements are:

- Provision of greater access of boys and girls to primary education in both urban and rural areas.
- Decrease in the female illiteracy rate from 34.7 percent in 1998 to 19.8 percent in 2001, a bigger decline than in the male rate, which fell from 33.9 to 20.2 percent in the same period.
- Implementation of illiteracy programmes through the cooperation of various public and private bodies, in which 50 percent of the participants (aged over 15) are female.
- Development of vocational training programmes on a national scale.
- Updating of targets in the preparatory basic action plan for the transformation of the national education system and the redirection of content towards gender equity and equality in the National Core Curriculum, the instrument which sets the standard for the national education system.
- Review of the National Core Curriculum from the gender perspective in both formal and informal education. According to a January 2004 study, a gap persists between the coverage and the quality of the service, reinforcing the lack of coherence between basic, adult, vocational, secondary and higher education and the socio-economic, political and cultural demands (43).

Main obstacles

- The correlation between education and employment is unfavourable for women. The progress in education has not meant increased access and entry to the labour market for women.
- Although there is scant information on gender equality and geographic location, according to figures from Education for All gender inequality in education persists in urban and rural areas.
- Honduras fares badly where gender equality is concerned, owing to persisting gender inequality in education in the indigenous population. This situation affects progress at the national level.
- Lack of technical and financial resources for carrying out initiatives such as the improvement and expansion of secondary education.
- Ongoing violence, in all forms, against women and girls and continuing perception of the problem as a series of private incidents.
- Discontinuity in the availability of sex-education and reproductive-health handbooks, which has contributed to the high rate of adolescent pregnancy.

IV. Women in power and decision-making

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Various pieces of legislation were adopted or amended in the period covered by this report in recognition of women's human rights with a view to overcoming their marginalization in decision-making.

The period 1995-2004 has seen the publication of the Domestic Violence Act (1997), the Act establishing the National Institute for Women (1998), and the Equal Opportunities for Women Act (2000) (44).

A bill amending the Municipalities Act is being drafted, with a view to legalizing the creation of the municipal offices for women, together with a bill on reform of the section of the Criminal Code

dealing with offences against sexual freedom and personal honour, including offences of trafficking in women and the commercial exploitation of women and children.

Clear progress with respect to civic participation toward a high representation of women was made in the composition - altered by constitutional amendments - of the Supreme Court of Justice. Women are also in the majority as official guardians and members of the government prosecutor's department, with 58.5 and 55 percent respectively.

The State, in conjunction with public and private bodies, has introduced and/or backed initiatives which have led to such achievements as:

1. Availability of data to facilitate the analysis of the situation of women in the exercise of power
2. Establishment of gender units in State agencies
3. Gender mainstreaming in the local management methodology handbooks used by the Ministry of the Interior and Justice, and training of technical personnel in their use.
4. Active participation in the sectoral panels on governance and human rights
5. Decentralization and local development
6. Technical back-up for the establishment and operation of the municipal offices for women.

Main obstacles

- Prevalence of a culture of exclusion in political parties and in other areas where power is exercised.
- Scant involvement of women in the adoption of economic and political decisions or in the exercise of power at the local, national and international level.
- Limited access by women to posts filled by popular vote and to public office, although women account for 50 percent of voters.

IV. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The first measures to improve the situation with regard to violence against Honduran women were introduced in the 1980s in connection with the public gender-discrimination debate and the call for society to build a situation in which all citizens have full and genuine access to the fundamental rights and in which violence committed against women in private or public is not ignored.

In recent years, public violence and civic insecurity have increased and constitute a significant public-health issue.

Although sexual violence is one of the commonest types of violence (now boosted by trafficking in children and adolescents for sexual purposes), it is usually ignored as a social problem.

The main achievements in the area of State activities and public policies are:

1. At the legal level, adoption of the Domestic Violence Act, the Family Code, the Equal Opportunities for Women Act, and amendments to the Criminal Code. Under the new Code of Criminal Procedure, domestic violence offences may be prosecuted automatically by the Public Prosecutor.

2. Establishment of the Office of the Procurator for Women, the family guidance centres, and the special domestic violence courts, which issue protection orders and receive and process reports under the Domestic Violence Act.
3. Approval of the regional project "Gender perspectives in the modernization of police institutions and in civic security".
4. Establishment of a legal and institutional framework for protecting girls in the context of the sexual and commercial exploitation in Honduras (45) and design of a module on violence for inclusion in the household survey.

Main obstacles

- Limited capacity of some of the agencies created by the State to address the problem and respond effectively to reports.
- Lack or underdevelopment of national institutional machinery for prevention and for the protection of the rights of the direct and indirect victims of violence.
- Lack of an operational network to facilitate coordinated and sustained efforts by public agencies and partnership with private bodies to share and learn from experience.
- Ignorance of most Honduran women of the legislation designed to protect their right to life free of violence.

Mexico

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Social policy in Mexico has designed and incorporated specific activities to address the needs of women living in poverty. In March 2004, the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL), acting through the National Institute of Social Development (INDESOL) in coordination with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), invited civil society organizations (CSOs) to participate in a competitive tender entitled "Opportunities for low-income women in rural areas". This aims to elicit new approaches to tackling the problems faced by rural women; and to test and evaluate mechanisms and methodologies for identifying training elements and instruments, which, from a gender perspective and in comprehensive fashion, exploit capacities among rural women to help them enter and participate in profitable and sustainable economic activities.

Progress was made by creating the Monitoring Unit on Experiences and Perceptions of Poverty from a Gender Perspective, in a joint effort of coordination between INDESOL, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and Colegio de Mexico.

The monitoring unit will establish a databank, drawing on various data sources, to monitor poverty among the population from a gender perspective.

In June 2002 the Ministry of Economic Affairs set up a Gender Equity Unit with the following programmes designed specially for women:

1. The Rural Women's Microfinance Fund (FOMMUR) (xiii).
2. The National Fund for the Support of Social Enterprises (FONAES) (xiv).

The Ministry of Economic Affairs has structured its work to comprehensively promote gender equity and equality of opportunities, focusing for 2004 mainly on promoting the incorporation of women in business activities, which support job creation and family welfare.

The National Mechanism for Women organized the First National Conference of Women Entrepreneurs. The most important outcome was the decision to create a National Network of Women Entrepreneurs, to promote the advancement of women in productive and service enterprises, business chambers, labour unions and the public sector.

In the area of labour, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (STPS) ran a permanent campaign to eliminate discrimination against women in the workplace, and a campaign for training in the gender perspective. These affirmative measures included the following activities:

- (1) 13 agreements signed with various firms, state governments and women's associations on prohibition of non-pregnancy certification to gain employment, recognition of family responsibilities and breast-feeding period;
- (2) dissemination of women's labour rights through inter alia radio spots, posters and charters of rights and obligations; and
- (3) holding of two events, entitled "First National Conference of Women Workers - Protection of Maternity: for a Unionism with Gender Equity" and "Sexual Harassment and Violence in the Workplace".

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Women and Health Programme (PROMSA) (xv) has promoted a variety of activities and strategies aimed at incorporating the gender perspective in the health sector. One of the key elements in the gender mainstreaming component was implementation in 2003 of the pilot plan for a gender-equity certification process in health care units.

Another key initiative involved introducing the gender perspective in health-care budgeting, in order to identify women's special needs in each specific programme.

The year 2004 also saw creation of the National Centre for Gender Equity and Reproductive Health, the National Centre for Childhood and Adolescent Health, which is responsible for the Childhood Health and Adolescent Health programmes. In addition, the National Scheme for Comprehensive Family Development (SNDIF) runs the Child Health programme which aims to improve health conditions among groups of children that are unable to access basic health services.

Activities have been carried out in the area of preventing and combating violence against women.

SNDIF launched the Programme on Prevention and Comprehensive Care for Teen Pregnancy. (xvi) This social problem is also being addressed by the Ministry of Education (SEP), which designed a programme entitled "A Second Chance", providing economic and school support for pregnant teenagers to enable them to cope with maternity while continuing to study.

The Health Ministry Gender Unit identified the need to continue working with CSOs on the assumption that the Government and civil society are partners in many activities, while at the same time allowing for competition and participation, as well as objective dissent.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The National Institute for Women (INMUJERES) collaborated with the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) in launching a nationwide project entitled "Gender Equity in Basic Education" and aimed at building the capacities of primary school teachers in order to foster a culture of gender equity and inclusion of the gender perspective in national education system curricula by designing and implementing the course "Building Gender Equity in the Primary School". The course will run from 2003 to 2006, by which time it aims to cover all national teachers. It is expected to help incorporate the gender perspective into the hidden curriculum and prevent gender discrimination at school.

On legislative issues, the Protection of Girls, Boys and Adolescents Act was passed in 2000. A decree establishing compulsory pre-school education for children of five, four and three years of age as from 2004, 2005 and 2008, respectively was issued in 2002; and in April 2004 the Special Commission for Children, Adolescents and Families was established in the Chamber of Deputies.

In the education domain, the Opportunities Programme (xvii) awards scholarships to support the enrolment, continuity of studies and regular attendance of students under 18.

The Community Childcare Centres (CAIC) model, developed jointly between the SNDIF and SEP, is emerging as a semi-school-based modality of initial education for socio-economically disadvantaged young children who do not have access to school-based educational systems.

In addition to the Programme for Prevention, Care, Disincentives and Eradication of Child Labour in Poor Urban Areas, SNDIF also operates the National Programme of Care and Prevention for Street Children and Youths.

Participation by Mexico in the 2002 Special Session of the General Assembly on Children paved the way for preparation of the programme entitled "A Mexico Suitable for Childhood and Adolescence. Programme of Action 2002-2010". The project was prepared on an interagency basis, with participation from CSOs.

IV. Women in power and decision-making

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Reforms to the Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures (COFIPE) implemented in 2002 (xviii) ranked Mexico 34th worldwide, in terms of establishing gender quotas in its electoral legislation.

The reforms are aimed at guaranteeing women's participation in elective posts at the federal level, establishing that applications to register candidates for deputies and senators can never contain over 70 percent of either sex. It also establishes that each of the three first segments of every proportional representation list must contain a candidate of a different sex.

The Commission on Government Human Rights Policy was established under the Ministry of the Interior; the Federal Act for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination was passed; and recommendations made by the National Human Rights Commission have been addressed.

In two activities and initiatives Mexico has been a pioneer: it is the first country in the world to install an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights during peacetime; and

it is the first country whose Government has commissioned the United Nations to conduct a national assessment on human rights. Chapter five of that assessment, presented in December 2003, addresses the issue of women's human rights. The first general statement relates to the incorporation of the provisions of international conventions, especially CEDAW and the Belem do Para Convention, in national and state legislation and their enforcement.

The project entitled "Legislating from a Gender Perspective" aims at promoting a legislative agenda that guarantees equality and non-discrimination under the law in upholding the fundamental rights of women and children.

Nonetheless, tight legislative deadlines hinder monitoring and continuity of the activities embarked upon; and this is compounded by a lack of knowledge on gender issues among legislators and scant attention paid to gender as a priority issue.

IV. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In 2002 the national mechanism for the advancement of women implemented the National Programme for Life without Violence (xix) to help eradicate domestic violence by creating a national system of public policies on gender-based prevention, treatment, information and evaluation.

A Comprehensive System of Care for Women Victims of Domestic Violence (SIAMAVIF) has been set up under the above programme.

Study and research activities include the National Survey of Violence against Women (ENVIM, 2003) conducted by the National Centre for Health Surveys. At the national level, the 2003 National Survey on the Dynamics of Family Relations (ENDIREH, 2003) was carried out to form the statistical subsystem on violence - a project coordinated by INMUJERES, the National Office of Statistics (INEGI), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Main obstacles

Although progress has been made, obstacles and resistance have prevented the full implementation of plans and programmes developed, including cultural resistance to the topic in general and - inter alia - to the work of the national mechanism, the institutionalization of the gender perspective and the alignment of national legislation with international commitments made through binding instruments.

The obstacles include resistance to gender mainstreaming, and insufficient staffing and budget to carry out relevant activities.

Another obstacle is the budget's insufficiency for attaining the goals of each programme. In March 2004, the Chamber of Deputies petitioned the Federal Government for the budgetary authorizations necessary for the Council to expand its budget.

Nicaragua

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Latin America and the Caribbean. To cope with this reality, the Government designed an Enhanced Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (ERCERP) and is currently working on an ERCERP II. The female poverty situation generally improved between 1998 and 2001, since for every 100 men living in poverty, the number of women in a similar predicament fell from 98.8 to 97.3 (46).

Although women's participation in the labour market has increased, they continue to lag behind men in this regard and their employment possibilities are much more precarious.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MYPYME) are currently the nation's most important sources of jobs and income. Microenterprises constitute the survival strategy for broad segments of the population submerged in poverty and unemployment (47).

Mention must be made of the following programmes:

1. Direct job creation programmes. Direct job creation has been the responsibility of government agencies such as: the Emergency Social Investment Fund (FISE), the Nicaraguan Municipal Development Institute (INIFOM), the Rural Development Institute (IDR) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAGFOR).
2. Labour training and technical assistance programmes for job creation or income generation. They aim at institutional gender mainstreaming.

The formulation of the National Employment Policy has been launched. The National Development Plan is expected to open up new job opportunities locally, which should provide employment alternatives to this migratory flow.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

- Implementation of the National Multisectoral Strategic Plan to Prevent STDs and HIV/AIDS in all institutions working in this area in Nicaragua.
- Implementation of the General health Act.
- Review and preparation of healthcare policies: National Health Plan, Life-cycle Comprehensive Care Model, and the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme, which includes the topic of masculinity and identifies gender rights and sexuality as cross-cutting issues.
- Community Health and Nutrition Programme (PROCOSAN) implemented.
- Design and implementation of a budgetary methodology and an information, planning and budgeting system (SIPLA), which has helped in the process of decentralization with efficient and equitable resource allocation.

- Inclusion of human rights and gender equality, as cross-cutting issues, in the National Strategic Plan for the Prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS.
- Revitalization of the National Commission to Prevent Maternal and Perinatal Mortality along with the National Commission on Breast-Feeding, the National Commission on Micronutrients, and the Technical Committee on Food Security and Nutrition.
- Inclusion of the provision of health services for vulnerable groups in the mother-child, old-age and disabled population groups in Act No. 423.
- Review and updating of healthcare regulations, and provision of instructions to take account of the gender perspective, violence and evidence-based medicine, by the Ministry of Health.
- Introduction, under The General Health Act (No. 423), approved in 2002, of legal amendments aimed at guaranteeing equity in healthcare. Although progress has been made in promulgating the law and its regulations, technical regulations are still pending, along with care protocol manuals which are important for ensuring that the health sector fulfils its role.

Main obstacles

The Health Ministry's integrated information system (SIMINSA) is being implemented in the SILAIS of Matagalpa, Jinotega, the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN), Rio San Juan, Masaya and Granada. Outpatient morbidity among the country's ethnic groups is now being noted on daily record sheets.

Although MINSA health services include specific activities targeting women and children, there is no specific budget for women's care in the different stages of the life cycle.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Progress has been made in overcoming gender discrimination in the education sector, and higher levels of schooling are reducing inequities between men and women.

The formulation of the National Education Plan 2001-2015, which is intended to mark out fundamental trends in the national education system for the next 15 years, with the aim of improving the quality of learning and enhancing coverage, access and equity at all system levels.

Programmes designed to support education reform involve introducing the gender perspective in the design of curricula and educational materials and address other issues such as violence in the school, sex education and STDs and HIV/AIDS.

Approval of the Education Participation Act in March 2002 gave the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECD) the chance to deepen the decentralization process in education management. The policy aims to improve education coverage, prioritizing the poorest population segments in a bid to reduce inequity.

Main MECD plans, programmes and projects:

1. MECD Secondary School Reform Plan

2. Learning Project II
3. Programmes to support primary and secondary education reform with guidance and vocational training
4. Project to promote human rights in teacher training institutes
5. Literacy and basic adult education programme (PAEBANIC)
6. Education for Life Programme

Main obstacles

Grade repetition and dropout have been persistent education problems in Nicaragua. The first of these is more acute in the early grades and in rural areas; in the case of dropout, 52 per cent of boys and girls drop out of primary school before completing the fourth grade, and only 80 per cent of those that do complete the cycle go on to enrol in secondary school.

The main causes of dropout are a lack of paid work and the distances involved in getting to school.

IV. Women in power and decision-making

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Civil Service and Public Service Career Act: This draft legislation, currently debated in the Plenary of the National Assembly, aims to strengthen institutional and governance in the civil service.

Equal Opportunities Bill: This legal instrument aims to advance measures to promote and protect equal opportunities between men and women, by designing a State policy that helps to overcome the gender inequalities that still persist, prioritizing measures and activities in designing health policies to preserve women's quality of life.

V. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In recent years a concerted effort has been made by the Government, civil society and the women's movement to prevent violence against women, children and adolescents. For this purpose the National Commission on Violence against Women, Children and Young Persons was established, and has since been working to formulate a National Plan to Prevent Intrafamily and Sexual Violence.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports is promoting the Education for Life Programme in coordination with the National Police Force, the Ministry for the Family (MIFAMILIA), the Ministry of Health (MINSA) and civil society organizations.

In 2003, the Nicaraguan Institute for Women created a Violence Prevention Department to follow up activities affecting the institutions that comprise the National Commission for Combating Violence.

MINSA has developed a computerized information system (SIMINSA), in which a range of basic indicators on physical, sexual and psychological violence have been incorporated.

MIFAMILIA has drafted regulations on Comprehensive Care and Special Protection for Children and Adolescents.

The National Police Force has designed and established among the Special Offices for Women and Children an information system that will make it possible to record information, and to monitor incidence, prevalence and reoffending in domestic and sexual violence.

Main obstacles

Although progress has been made in the area of compiling sex-disaggregated data, not all information is processed or published in that form. Public institutions in particular have no tradition of a statistical culture. Statistics production does not meet the needs of all users and suffers from limited conceptual and methodological development.

Lack of resources seriously hampers implementation of the Platform for Action.

There has been little dissemination and/or socialization of the further initiatives and measures identified in the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly.

Procedural changes and efforts to enforce and disseminate laws need to be persevered with.

Paraguay

Overall progress achieved

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In an important step for the promotion of equality between men and women, the Women's Bureau of the Office of the President of the Republic has formulated two plans to strengthen public gender policies in Paraguay in the framework of the Beijing Platform for Action: the first National Plan for Equal Opportunities for Women (1997-2001), and the second National Plan for Equal Opportunities for Women (2003-2007), approved by the Government.

The first Plan for Equal Opportunities for Women called for the creation of an advisory council and a monitoring committee, but this did not happen. The second National Plan for Equal Opportunities has a battery of indicators for the different areas, and establishes mechanisms for civil society coordination along programmatic lines.

Puerto Rico

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Government has set up the Special Communities Agency, designed to attend to the needs of the poorest communities and advance their development through self-management and the training of those within the community. Community planning boards organized in each of the communities are made up mainly of women, who have assumed decisive leadership.

In 1997 the Working Mothers' Protection Act was amended, so that employers who dismiss a female worker on account of pregnancy or deny her maternity leave are now punishable by suspension or revocation of their business or professional licences or by a fine of up to \$5,000.

In 1997, Act No. 152 of 18 December established that the Prize for the Promotion of Equal Employment Opportunities for Women should be awarded to all public bodies that distinguish themselves in the field.

In 1998, Act No. 124 of 17 June was adopted, eliminating discriminatory provisions on the exercise of business activities by married women.

Act No. 84 of 1 March 1999 called for the establishment of day-care centres for pre-school girls and boys in all public agencies.

In 1999, Act No. 181 of 30 July granted an equal right to maternity leave to working mothers who choose to adopt children.

In that same year, Act No. 212 of 3 August ordered public agencies to formulate affirmative action plans guaranteeing that there would be no gender discrimination between male and female employees. The Office of the Procurator for Women oversees the implementation of this law by reinforcing the Government policy of combating any form of discrimination that might interfere with women's rights in relation to work.

Act No. 245 of 28 October 2000 compels employers to pay full salary to a working mother during maternity leave. Previously, only half the salary was paid.

In 2002, Act No. 155 ordered all government agencies to designate areas where the right to privacy of working mothers in their employ is protected so that they can nurse their infants, thereby facilitating their access to work and helping them to keep their jobs.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Department of Health has begun to work in conjunction with the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in community health to develop a national programme of work each year for the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS. This community liaison group, known as the Community Planning Group (GPC), spearheads efforts to include a gender perspective, based on the inputs of NGOs specialized in developing service and prevention programmes for women and young people. GPC monitors the implementation of this programme of work throughout the year.

Abortion has been legal in Puerto Rico since 1974, in accordance with jurisprudence established by the Supreme Court. Induced abortions can be practised only in private family-planning clinics and are performed by doctors specializing in gynaecology and obstetrics.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Commission for Women's Affairs in 1996 developed and established a teacher-training programme for men and women designed to promote gender equality in vocational education. In 1998, Act No. 3 was adopted, prohibiting the sexual harassment of pupils in public and private schools.

IV. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In 1996, Act No. 226 was adopted, providing for a pilot programme establishing a medical protocol in relation to care for victims of domestic violence. Act No. 284 of 21 August 1999 which prohibits stalking and makes it a crime in Puerto Rico.

In 2003, the Office of the Procurator for Women designed a model for the prevention of violence in marital relations between young couples, to be used as a teaching tool in the public schools. That same year a project was developed to train teachers and support staff on issues of discrimination and violence against women.

By an executive order issued on the initiative of the Procurator for Women in July 2003, an Inter-Agency Commission for an Integrated Domestic Violence Policy was set up to establish the machinery needed to ensure effective implementation of the established policy for preventing and dealing with domestic violence.

The Office of the Procurator for Women provides financial support to Puerto Rican NGOs for their prevention, protection and treatment programmes for cases of domestic and sexual violence. It launched a large-scale campaign denouncing domestic violence throughout the country with full media coverage, and it is currently developing videos on the subject of sexual violence that can serve as community education tools. For the past year, educational meetings have been held on the major university campuses regarding sexual violence and the various forms it can take. These efforts include publications designed to reach a broader public.

Dominican Republic

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

One of the programmes of the State Secretariat of Agriculture (OSAM) is the agri-food production support programme PROALPA RD-CHINA), which has been operating since 2002 with support from the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in order to support food production. Of the project's components, the following two are directly related to women:

1. Agribusiness management for rural men and women. Its purpose is to foster women's and men's development in rural areas.
2. Microcredit for Rural Women. This programme was launched in January 2002. It provides credit to women in rural areas to enable them to increase production and generate income.

The agribusiness management programme benefits persons of both sexes, though the microcredit programme is for women only.

Main obstacles

Among the obstacles encountered in developing the system are the following:

- At the time the programme was developed, those taking part in its implementation lacked a gender vision.
- When a project is implemented, a gender-sensitive vision prevails formally, in particular in verbal agreements between the various bodies involved. However, this vision does not materialize when the project is implemented.
- Most of the amounts extended to women are very small compared to those extended to men. This may be observed in the Agribusiness Management programme.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Pregnant Adolescents Programme: The health data from the Population and Health Census (ENDESA, 2002) indicate that 23.3 percent of all adolescent girls (for the purposes of the census, women between 15 and 19 years of age) have at some time conceived. On that basis, and in view of other factors involving adolescents' sexual and reproductive health, the programme to reduce pregnancy among disadvantaged adolescents has been proposed. It relies on inter-agency cooperation to build the capacities of the various government agencies and NGOs to prevent and treat teenage pregnancy. Implementation of the programme is the responsibility of the State Secretariat for Women (SEM), with coordination by the Office of the First Lady.

In addition to this programme, the State Secretariat of Public Health and Social Welfare (SESPAS), under the National Comprehensive Healthcare Programme for Adolescents (PRONAISA), offers adolescents targeted services, including information and education on the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), with adolescent extension workers carrying out educational activities based on peer models.

Sectoral plan for combating HIV/AIDS: One of the main health problems facing the Dominican Republic is the incidence of HIV/AIDS among the population. According to the National Programme for the Control of STDs and AIDS (DIGECITSS), in October 2003 the number of persons known to be infected with HIV/AIDS was 15,446, and it was forecast that by 2005 the rate of HIV-positive adults would reach 2.4 percent. Men were the most affected, accounting for 62.9 percent of cases, but an increasing prevalence among women was noted and as a result the 1.7:1 male-female ratio could change in the next five years.

With the goal of establishing policies for the prevention of HIV/AIDS in women, SEM, with the technical and financial support of the Presidential Council on AIDS (COPRESIDA), set up an HIV/AIDS prevention unit, which has been in operation since 2003.

In addition to the HIV/AIDS prevention programme, other activities relating to women's sexual and reproductive health were conducted. The Sectoral Plan is coordinated by the SEM Health Department and by COPRESIDA.

Main obstacles

- Lack of financial resources.
- Lack of staff to coordinate programming and coordination.
- Insufficiency of statistical data to carry out research on which to base targeted plans.

IV. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

Gender-based violence is dealt with in Dominican law under the term "intrafamily violence". The main legislation dealing with violence is Act No. 24-97 on intrafamily violence, which should be credited with recognizing and making visible gender-based violence and providing for the mechanisms to punish it.

There is a Care Centre for Abused Women that specializes in evaluating the condition of victims of violence. These units are the kernel for enforcement of the Act in all communities that so request at the national level.

SEM is developing a training process for the Public Prosecutor's Office, judges and police forces to improve the quality of intervention in cases of domestic violence.

Main obstacles

An assessment of Act No. 24-97 has revealed the following problems:

- There are no regulations for its implementation.
- It depends on interpretation by the judges that must apply it.
- Sexual harassment is not defined as a serious offence.

Structural problems include:

1. Lack of government funding.
2. Women's difficulty to exercise their rights because of ignorance and a lack of appropriate legal aid free of charge.
3. Lack of rehabilitation programmes for women who are victims of violence.
4. Lack of services in rural and marginal communities.
5. Lack of sex-disaggregated record keeping by age regarding violence.
6. Lack of a national registry of violence against women.
7. Lack of follow-up, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are lacking in this area.
8. Lack of a basic policy on the importance of measuring impacts.

As regards gender-based violence, follow-up by government agencies is confined to the legal aspect of the issue and takes the form of punishment of violence rather than its prevention.

Republic of Suriname

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Government of Suriname ensures the development of activities that promote public policies designed to eliminate gender inequalities in accessing employment opportunities and productive and financial resources.

The participation of women in public bodies is encouraged as a follow-up to the formulation and implementation of gender policies promoting equitable participation in decision-making.

The Ministry of Labour is responsible for the implementation of strategies that aim at improving women's access to the labour market and eliminating discrimination in hiring.

Initiatives are launched aimed at ensuring equal opportunities of access to technical training services for employment and to social benefits; equal remuneration; equal access to pensions; and the prohibition of dismissal on grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave.

There is need for an employment policy providing for equality of opportunities, working conditions that are better for women and meet their special needs; and for appropriate social security policies.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Ministry of Home Affairs implements, and provides financial support for, the Comprehensive Plan of Action on Gender Issues.

In that area, the Government of Suriname has set the following main objectives:

- strengthening the system of analysis of maternal mortality
- formulating policies facilitating access to health and social-security services focusing on comprehensive care.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Ministry of Education promotes an education plan that encourages a culture of gender equality, raising awareness among the executives, the teaching staff and the educational community, favouring women's access to education and the improvement of educational conditions for women and incorporating the gender perspective in the curriculum.

Measures are taken concerning the enrolment and retention of pregnant girls in the schools.

IV. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Ministry of Home Affairs has seen to the development of information and education initiatives on the rights of women and the adoption of measures for punishing and eradicating violence against women in collaboration with the Foundation "Stop Violence against Women".

As a specific measure for dealing with violence against women, the criminal code penalizes gender-based violence and provides for its punishment. Counselling is provided to the victims of violence and sexual abuse in cooperation with the Foundation "Stop Violence against Women". Training workshops organized jointly with the Ministry of Justice and the Police provide information and legal support.

The Ministry of Home Affairs facilitates the provision of technical, professional and financial support in these matters. The National Steering Committee for Women Workers' Rights has presented projects aimed at preventing and eradicating sexual harassment in the workplace.

Main obstacles

- It is essential that the State should promote, direct and monitor the deployment of public policies for the prevention and eradication of all forms of violence against women nationwide and for providing care to the victims and that it should develop specialized activities and services specialized in that area.
- It is necessary to promote a culture of information to strengthen the analytical capacities of professionals working on issues of violence against women and intrafamily violence so that they have enough systematically generated data to formulate proposals for action.

Standardization of the records, sources and processing systems available in the bodies and agencies that generate the data will make it possible to devise indicators that can provide information on the prevalence and incidence of violence and of the performance of the National System in the various areas. The design of the system and the public-policy impact assessment should involve mechanisms ensuring the participation of the persons using the services.

Uruguay

I. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

On the labour front, the growing presence of women in the country's workforce does not mean that there is equality in employment access and conditions. Unemployment rates for women are systematically higher than those for men. The labour market remains segmented, both horizontally and vertically: women are still found mainly in traditional sectors, and their increased levels of education and training have not translated into positions of professional responsibility. Moreover, women are not properly protected by the social security system, as can be seen in the coverage rates for each benefit under the Social Insurance Bank. Nor are women free from discrimination when it comes to pay: indeed this is perhaps the most tangible manifestation of occupational inequality between men and women.

The establishment of the Tripartite Commission on Equality and of the National Employment Council and the introduction of the Proimujer programme have demonstrated the importance of addressing gender issues as a shared responsibility of all parties to labour relations. In August 2003, it was agreed to extend and broaden the programme. The purpose was to contribute to strengthening proactive employment policies, reinforcing training facilities by incorporating the gender perspective and basic employability skills, and supporting sustainable local initiatives for training and employment, especially in the country's interior.

The "Project for the development and the economic and social integration of rural women" is mainly intended to promote development by providing land for female farm-workers and their families. Supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Japanese cooperation, it seeks to promote gender equity by empowering rural women through development

of their entrepreneurial skills, enhancing their organizational capacity, and encouraging their social participation. As a further outcome, rural women have constituted legally established organizations.

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The National Institute for Minors (INAME) is responsible for policy relating to children and adolescents. Activities carried out aim at providing comprehensive attention to children and adolescents. Various projects have been drawn up, incorporating the gender dimension and relating to family problems such as violence, mistreatment and abuse. The Institute places special emphasis projects targeting especially teenage girls and pregnant adolescents through comprehensive care.

There is parliamentary debate on agenda items such as assisted childbirth, sex education, the decriminalization of abortion and intrafamily violence, considered to be public health issues. The most significant legislative advance has been the draft Law on Sexual and Reproductive Health, which is now under consideration in the Senate.

In 2001, contraception services were included within the framework of gynaecological consultations at public health units. This represents an important step forward, in that policies based on so-called "vertical programmes" supported by international funding are now being replaced by programmes funded with the Public Health Ministry's own resources. Training is provided in sexual and reproductive health. Moreover, the Equal Opportunities and Rights Plan includes specific steps to promote sexual and reproductive rights. An advisory council has been established, including social organizations, government agencies, academic institutions and health professionals. In this context, the Programme of Comprehensive Care for Women (PAIM) has been in operation since 1996 at the municipal level and carries out sexual- and reproductive-health training activities.

Although health programmes have been implemented, there is still a lack of education campaigns at the national and departmental level to encourage the recognition, ownership and exercise of the relevant rights in the context of promoting equity and good citizenship.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In education, mention should be made of the programme for "Consolidation of Equity" which aims at the development of early education (for three-, four- and five-year olds)", was launched in 1996 and is still growing. It is sponsored by the National Public Education Administration (ANEP), the Central Executive Council, the Council on Primary Education, education centres and the World Bank.

Further support to this initiative was provided in 1998 through the adoption of Act No. 17.015, making early education compulsory, by the National Assembly. The ANEP mounted a lobbying campaign to have Parliament pass legislation that would expand the period of compulsory education, a proposal made as part of policy to promote equity.

IV. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

INAME coordinates activities with NGOs and with State and public organizations. Although information and awareness-raising campaigns on violence and the psychological, physical and sexual abuse of minors have been launched, larger-scale endeavours are needed. Progress has been made in combating domestic violence. Reference must be made to Act No. 17.514 of 2 August 2002 on that issue. Although domestic violence was made a crime in 1995, the impact of that move was very limited. The new law establishes for the first time the need for a national action plan, which is to be pursued through a special National Advisory Council for combating domestic violence. A number of programmes and projects have been launched as a joint effort to combat domestic violence with increasing involvement by the State and civil society.

Of special importance in this process has been the Family Violence Subprogramme of the Public Safety Programme, which the Ministry of the Interior has been conducting with Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) funding and the main objective of which is to prevent and treat interpersonal violence and to reduce risks and the feeling of insecurity. However, despite its significance, the family violence programme was discontinued, because of lack of domestic funding, once the IDB funds were exhausted. Its results and findings are still being analyzed, and it is clear that the experiment resulted in considerable feedback, knowledge transfer and coordination, providing relevant information and promoting awareness of the issue.

Main problems

- The low ranking accorded gender issues on public agendas and the lack of consistency in the Government's position on gender mainstreaming in public policies.
- The chronic discontinuity in State activity processes, reflecting a poor record of inter-agency coordination and cooperation.
- The lack of any general policy or guidelines, with the consequence that the activities taken do not cover all the areas indicated in the Beijing Platform and are inadequate to guarantee the rights of the population as a whole.
- The institutional weakness of the specialized agency (INFM) that is responsible for guiding gender policies, preventing it from fulfilling its legally mandated role as lead agency.

Venezuela

1. Women, the economy, poverty and employment

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Government has implemented a number of policies to promote employment, access to credit and the construction of a better quality of life. The Venezuelan State is thus fulfilling the commitment acquired at the Millennium Summit to reduce poverty (in the short and medium term) through social and economic strategies.

Food security for the population is a key issue in this domain, and the Mercal mission was created to promote the Special Programme for Food Security (PESA) in urban and peri-urban zones. An equitable gender distribution will be taken into account when incorporating people into the programme, bearing in mind the following criteria:

- households living in poverty
- households led by single women
- households whose heads have less than three years or grades of formal schooling.

In 2002, with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a strategic partnership was forged with the Ministry of Labour, the Women's Development Bank and INAMUJER, to implement the plan for Promotion and Education on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Gender Equity in the Workplace, establishing relations between sexual and reproductive health (SSR) and the poverty situation, gender equity, violence, and women's sovereignty.

The Women's Development Bank was created by a decree issued in March 2001. The bank is defined as a public microfinance institution, providing microcredits and other financial and non-financial products for the advancement of low-income women living in poverty and engaged in goods and services production and trade, on a micro-enterprise scale, in low-income sectors. The bank also serves as facilitator of training activities and technical assistance.

The Women's Development Bank facilitates access to financial and non-financial resources for micro-enterprises run by women who live in poverty, or in a process of impoverishment, with the aim to create eventually decent sources of employment and income for the family group, leading to the elimination of poverty and inequity in the national income distribution. It has facilitated the creation of popular networks among users of its services and concluded strategic cooperation agreements with national and international institutions.

Another institution that promotes access to jobs and credit is the Microfinance System Development Fund (FONDEMI), established by decree in 2001. FONDEMI supports policies to nurture, develop and strengthen the microfinance system by extending credits to self-employed or unemployed persons and community employment associations.

Since 2003, INAMUJER has been implementing the Programme for the Development of Women's Economic Rights, the main objective of which is to promote, support and guarantee women's participation on a basis of gender equity. Its execution receives agency support from FONDEMI, INCE, the Ministry of Labour, the Women's Development Bank, the Ministry of Planning and Development, and the Eumelia Hernandez School for Women. Under this programme, INAMUJER has run dissemination workshops and extended credits in its capacity as FONDEMI execution body

II. Women and health

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In the framework of the Social Strategic Plan (2001-2007), the Ministry of Health and Social Development (MSDS) envisages health as part of social policies and prioritizes local activities to improve the conditions of health service, with emphasis on children, adolescents, women, indigenous people, older adults and disabled persons in order to reduce the glaring social divides.

The Comprehensive Health Care Model (MAI), based on the ambulatory services network, aims to mainstream gender by taking the socio-cultural component into account in all programmes implemented in health-care institutions.

Since 2003, as part of its policy to strengthen primary health care, the Government has implemented the Barrio Adentro Mission, a set of cross-cutting policies aimed at raising the quality of life among the most deprived sectors, promoting social and community organization by building social, health, education, food, economic, social, sporting, recreation and cultural networks.

The Vida and Delta projects are also being implemented under the auspices of the Barrio Adentro mission. The Vida project arose from the reorganization and strengthening of the Committee for the Prevention and Control of Maternal and Infant Mortality. The Delta project provides comprehensive care with an emphasis on preventing and controlling maternal and infant mortality.

In 2002, the National Committee for the Prevention and Control of Maternal and Infant Mortality was established, with the aim of pooling national and inter-sectoral forces to prevent and control maternal and infant mortality and to enhance the quality of perinatal care.

The Project for the Development of Autonomy in Sexual and Reproductive Health is currently implementing the Maternal Breast-Feeding Programme, which advocates exclusive maternal breast-feeding up to six months of age as a food security strategy.

Since 2001, the Ministry of Health and Social Development has been implementing the National Strategic HIV/AIDS Plan, as a health and social development policy tool to serve as a coordinating hub for organized and sustained responses, to facilitate the mobilization of financial and human resources for activities combating HIV/AIDS.

The National Programme on Sexual and Reproductive Health is implemented since 2000, as part of the Ministry of Health and Social Development's comprehensive health care programme run by the Sexual and Reproductive Health Commission. Activities included in the Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Care Plan aim to specifically address varied needs according to gender, stage of the life cycle, ethnic groups/indigenous peoples, territories and social classes.

The strengthening of family planning services and the provision of contraceptives is another of the strategies included in the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme. This programme formulates policies, activities and strategies for prevention and care, inter-sectoral coordination, and evaluation of sexual and reproductive health policies and projects.

Another major plan being implemented in the health sector is the National Concerted Plan for the Care and Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy X999-2004, which identifies teenage pregnancy as a social and public health problem. The plan encompasses five major areas of action: comprehensive prevention and care, training, research capacity building, and promotion and dissemination.

III. Women and education

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

In the education policy area, mechanisms are being developed to promote gender equality and the elimination of discrimination in all its guises. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports has implemented a curricular review to mainstream gender in curriculum contents and study methodology.

Venezuela guarantees free education at all levels up to university, under equal conditions for women and men. Basic education is compulsory up to ninth grade.

The right to education for adolescents who become pregnant while attending school is legally protected in Resolution 1.762 of 9 October 1996. Given the million and a half illiterate people in

Venezuela, the State inaugurated the Robinson Mission in July 2003 with a view to eradicating illiteracy within a short time frame. In view of its success, the Robinson Mission has been proposed by Venezuela for the 2004 UNESCO literacy prize, which has "Literacy and gender equality" as its slogan.

The Ribas Mission, created by the Government of Venezuela in 2003, promotes a new national educational project aiming to ensure that all Venezuelan women complete secondary school.

IV. Women and intrafamily violence

Mechanisms and implementation of plans and programmes

The Office of the National Commissioner for Women supports and assists women in the defence of their rights. The Office is currently implementing a programme on Women's Right of Access to Justice in order to promote compliance with laws, conventions, regulations and provisions relating to women's rights. The programme was set up by presidential decree in October 1999.

The Office of the Special Commissioner for Women, attached to the Public Commissioner's Office, with jurisdiction on women's rights nationwide, was instituted in April 2004.

Acting through INAMUJER with a view to protecting women's human rights, the Venezuelan State formulated and is implementing the National Plan on Care and Prevention of Violence against Women, with the general aim of creating an inter-agency and inter-sectoral intervention system to enable the authorities to deal with, punish and investigate cases of violence against women. Among its activities, the plan includes activities of shelter and protection for women victims of violence along with family members, by creating shelter homes for women whose physical integrity is in imminent danger as a result of family violence.

Recently, INAMUJER, with support from UNFPA, held a workshop for government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Venezuela; and a report was prepared describing steps taken in fulfilment of the Convention by the State.

With technical cooperation from UNICEF, INAMUJER is implementing the National Plan on Care and Prevention of Violence against Women, 2000-2007, educating women on their human rights and on the legal mechanisms available to them for their protection and defence, and ensuring the dissemination of such information.

Part III

Institutional development

Points of convergence

In relation to institutional development, most of the reporting States have set up by legislative decree mechanisms entrusted with formulating, directing, executing and surveying the implementation of national policies on women and drafted and adopted specific laws on gender issues.

In each State, specific institutional mechanisms are in place to formulate, implement and promote public policies for the advancement of women and to incorporate the gender perspective in the laws, policies, programmes and projects.

The Governments concur in highlighting that the functioning of the various institutional mechanisms and the implementation of projects in various areas under national policies on gender require support from international cooperation bodies.

In the face of the persisting fact that the gender perspective lacks adequate institutional status, one of the major outstanding challenges is to ensure gender mainstreaming across the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government in each State in order to encourage and promote conditions conducive to non-discrimination, equal opportunities, equal treatment, the full exercise of women's rights and their participation in the political, cultural, economic and social life of each country on equal terms with men.

The Governments further concur in underlining the need for comprehensive and coordinated management models ensuring a cross-cutting implementation of public policies aimed at gender equity, whether they are social and economic or concern access to political decision-making.

Lastly, the Governments stress the importance of understanding that changes will not be achieved through legislation alone but require tangible activities, such as identifying mechanisms for the implementation of legal provisions, raising awareness and providing information and training, especially to women. The proposals assign to women a leading role in actively advancing toward sharing power with men and ensuring that their concerns and needs are included in the political agendas.

Organized presentation of the information submitted by the Governments

Argentina

Institutional Development

With regard to national mechanisms for gender mainstreaming, there are at the national government level various units devoted to women's issues. In many cases, however, these mechanisms are marginal, have only skeleton staffing and an insufficient budget and funding, which results in deteriorating effectiveness.

The following mechanisms exist at the national level:

- The National Women 's Council (CNM), created by Presidential Decree 1426/92, in response to recommendations made under the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship: the Special International Office for Women's Affairs and the Ad Hoc Commission to Monitor Application of the Beijing Plan of Action.
- In other ministries: the "Tripartite Commission for Equal Opportunities for and Treatment of Men and Women in the Workplace" at the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security; and the "Coordinating Unit for the Mother and Child and Nutrition Programme" at the Ministry of Health (inter alia).
- At the provincial level, there were, as of December 2003, 21 women's offices at various hierarchical levels; and 133 municipalities have gender offices, which is significant since these units provide gender issues with a broader coverage and ensure an approach that addresses local problems.

The national mechanisms

Since 2003, CNM has been implementing various programmes and activities to promote gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women. These activities are carried out nationwide through the provincial and municipal women's offices and civil society organizations (CSOs). The National Council also prepares or helps prepare reports for submission to international organizations the Committee on the Elimination of Violence against Women (CEDAW), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and the United Nations Committee on Violence against Women. In addition it works with members of the National Congress and follows up bills introduced in the legislature that have direct or indirect impact on the status of women.

The Tripartite Commission on Equal Opportunities for and Treatment of Men and Women in the Workplace of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security was established in October 1998 as a result of a recommendation made by the International Labour Organization. It should be noted that CEDAW has constitutional rank in Argentina, the Plan for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women in the Workplace was approved by National Government Decree No. 254/98, and national Government bodies are required to adopt measures to fulfil the objectives of those instruments in their respective jurisdictions. The Tripartite Commission encompasses the government, union and business sectors.

This main mission of the Special International Office for Women's Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship is to participate in identifying, preparing and proposing plans, programmes, projects and foreign policy goals, in relation to the condition and status of women, acting in international organizations, entities or special commissions.

The Ad Hoc Commission to Monitor Application of the Beijing Platform for Action, has considered the topic of women and poverty as a key strategic objective in the country and the first stage of the Commission's work was devoted to overcoming that problem. Other issues that have required the Commission's attention are women's education and training, women's health, violence against women, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, and girls. The relevant critical areas of the Beijing Conference are analyzed extensively by the Commission.

Main obstacles

- The need to strengthen national mechanisms for the advancement of women, enhance their institutional role and consolidate their hierarchical status.
- Shortcomings in gender statistics and indicators: data with a gender breakdown are scarce. Although in recent years, various State agencies have developed statistical tools to measure gender differences, these efforts remain fragmentary.
- A lack of technical training, which inhibits the management, use or application of this information with concomitant difficulties in accessing statistical data, scant dissemination thereof and failure of such data to circulate among government agencies.

Barbados

Institutional Development

National mechanisms

Bureau of Gender Affairs

In 2000, in the response to the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Bureau of Women's Affairs was renamed the Bureau of Gender Affairs and was entrusted with:

- Facilitating gender mainstreaming of national development policies and programmes.
- Advising Government Agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on policies affecting the status of women and men, and monitoring the impact of these policies.
- Liaising with Regional and International Agencies and NGOs on gender and development issues.
- Implementing, monitoring and evaluating government policies, plans and programmes pertaining to gender and development.
- Participating in a variety of programmes to further the development of gender equity in areas such as public education, legislation reform and human resource development.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs is financed by the Government of Barbados.

National Advisory Council on Gender

The National Advisory Council on Women was changed to the National Advisory Council on Gender. The re-constitution took place in June 2001. The Council's terms of reference include identifying and monitoring gender-related issues and making appropriate recommendations to the Ministry.

Gender perspective, awareness-raising

A multi-sectoral approach has been adopted by the Bureau of Gender Affairs to promote gender equality and to analyze and redress the differential impact of policies and programmes on women and men. The Bureau seeks an effort to meet its mandate of mainstreaming gender across all government plans, programmes and policies.

In January 2002, the Bureau convened a National Symposium on Gender, whose objectives were:

- To identify and discuss the issues and emerging trends that have highlighted the need to focus on gender.
- To explore and deepen gender relations in Barbados.
- To identify and examine the factors that contribute to gender inequalities.
- To discuss and agree on the way forward for the Bureau of Gender Affairs.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs is also expected to formulate a national policy on gender and development.

Bolivia

Institutional Development

Supreme Decree No. 26.350 of October II, 2001 recognizes the Plans and Programmes of the Vice-Ministry for Women as State policies and enacts the Inter-agency Mechanism for Follow-up on Gender Policies. This led to the establishment of National Committees with civil society participation, which were granted independence and autonomy and preceded to monitor compliance with national and international commitments.

Once the various laws are enacted, it is up to each line ministry to work on the gender perspective. However, gender mainstreaming is not always achieved in all areas. Some sectors, such as Health and Education, are more successful in this respect, as their plans and programmes already focused to some extent on women.

The responsibilities of the ministries are established in the Organic Law of the Executive Branch and its regulations, which assigns to the Ministry of Sustainable Development responsibility for promoting gender policies through the Vice-Ministry for Women. As the body with responsibility for setting gender policy, the Vice-Ministry for Women promotes the implementation of indicators in coordination with the National Statistics Institute (INE) (in respect of family or domestic violence and on the household survey) and the National Health Information System (SNIS). These bodies are working on gender mainstreaming in the public investment system.

In 2003, the National Statistics Institute published for the first time national statistical data disaggregated by sex. The information reveals the existing gaps in respect of access to health care, education, work, housing and other sectors surveyed, especially in the economy.

The establishment of the Gender Policies Monitoring Mechanism led to the formation of joint State and civil-society bodies, known collectively at the national level as the Inter-agency Gender Committee (CIN). There is also an organized group in Parliament, known as the Parliamentary Women's Union, which promotes gender-sensitive laws (the women's legislative agenda).

NGOs have constantly offered suggestions and contributions to the Vice-Ministry's planning efforts, promoting gender-equity measures and activities to monitor compliance with the outcome of the World Conference on Women.

Main obstacles

- Substantial budgetary dependence on international cooperation agencies.
- Problems of coordination between national, departmental, and local planning systems.
- Deficient data standardization systems generating data that are not always broken down by sex.
- Discontinuity and uncertainty regarding status of human resources in the process of being trained.
- Instability resulting from operational difficulties caused by various programme extensions triggered by short-term shifts in Bolivian politics.
- Shortage of specialized, permanent staff and financial resources available for investment in gender equity.
- Political instability and rotation of officers and technical staff in the Vice-Ministry for Women.
- Non-implementation of various gender-related plans that were designed and negotiated.
- Failure to have the gender perspective embedded in government bodies or economic development plans and programmes, especially in relation to the rural areas.
- Insufficient political and civic participation of women, above all because many lack IDs and other documents; and other concerns, such as limited use of health services, the school dropout rate and domestic violence.

Costa Rica

Institutional Development

INAMU is an obligatory institutional reference on all issues relating to women. The following progress can be identified within its area of competence:

- Design and implementation of public policy for women in various areas such as:
 - Domestic violence
 - Sexual harassment
 - Access to justice
 - Autonomous life projects for young girls, adolescents and young people
 - Women's work and employment
 - Full and satisfactory sexuality
 - Political participation
 - Rights of rural women
 - Comprehensive health for women
 - Women's education
 - Credit for women
 - Women's citizenship
- Empowerment of women by strengthening their personal and social resources to exercise leadership; promotion of negotiation and social dialogue mechanisms at the local and regional level, to obtain commitments from public institutions based on the needs and interests of women, among other things.

- Strengthening of the regulatory framework for women's rights in substantive areas such as violence against women, paternity, economic regime of the family, etc.
- Development and dissemination of specialized knowledge on gender, conducive to change in patterns that justify discrimination and violence against women.

Institutional challenges

- Strengthening of the institutionalization of national policy for gender equality and equity, with the due ideological, regulatory, programmatic and budgetary framework.
- Coordination of ongoing public policies and processes around the following strategic gender interests, on which substantive progress is needed to improve women's states in society: citizenship; sexuality; economic rights; autonomous life projects for girls, adolescents and young people; and gender violence.
- Developing an institutional intervention strategy that conceptually and programmatically coordinates work around the strategic areas.
- Coordinating institutional services aimed at guaranteeing women's rights, through information, referral and monitoring, reception and processing of complaints, and specialized services.

Other mechanisms for the promotion of women's human rights

Various centralized and decentralized government bodies (ministries and autonomous institutions) carry out activities (programmes and projects) of defence, protection and dissemination of women's human rights in the economic, social and cultural domains. Those bodies include:

A. Municipal Women's Offices (OFIM)

OFIMs were instituted in 1996 under the National Operational System for Intrafamily-violence-related Care and Prevention (PLANOVI System), in order to set up facilities in the municipal structure, with inter-agency and inter-sectoral support, to provide information services, guidance and care for women, emphasizing domestic violence and dissemination of rights. INAMU is promoting the planned and sustained opening of OFIMs as part of its Municipal Women's Offices Programme. The Institute redefined the profile and scope of action of OFIMs as mechanisms to promote women's rights in the local domain, thereby transcending the initial approach which mainly focused on domestic violence. They now promote policies and programmes conducive to the exercise of women's rights and gender equality and equity at the local level.

These offices were formalized in 1998 through Act No. 781 on INAMU, which lists as one of its attributions: "to promote the creation of ministerial, sectoral and municipal women's offices, and guarantee and coordinate their functioning". OFIMs are seen as an essential mechanism to influence the design of public policies locally.

B. Municipal Commissions on the Status of Women (CMCM)

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (CMCM) forms part of the Municipal Council. Its function consists in examining and proposing motions related to the status of women for discussion and adoption in the Council.

C. National networks

Costa Rica has mechanisms in place to strengthen the exchange of experiences and knowledge, and to improve the scope of public policy to contribute towards gender equality and equity. Such mechanisms are:

- the National Network of Municipal Women's Offices (OFIMs) (set up in 1999)
- Networks for the prevention of intrafamily violence and providing care in that area.

Action to deal with the problem of intrafamily violence in Costa Rica is coordinated by the National Operational System for Intrafamily-violence-related Care and Prevention (PLANOVI System), established by Executive Decree in January 1998.

The National Operational Plan for Intrafamily-violence-related Care and Prevention (PLANOVI) had been designed and implemented in 1994-1998 by the National Centre for the Advancement of Women and the Family (now INAMU) and then developed into a proposal for comprehensively dealing with that problem in Costa Rica. During the process of its construction and implementation, PLANOVI targeted the transformation of institutional culture, promoting coordinated and concerted activities and bringing government closer to society. One of the activities undertaken to achieve this purpose consisted in setting up local networks.

- Local networks

The mission of local networks is to construct and consolidate a mechanism of inter-sectoral, inter-agency and civil-society coordination for the development of local policies for detection, care and prevention in relation to intrafamily violence.

- National network of networks

The national network of networks was established in early 1999 with a mission to become a mechanism for the coordination, planning and evaluation of processes relating to care and prevention in the area of intrafamily violence, undertaken locally by inter-agency and community networks.

D. Gender equity units

Ministerial and Sectoral Women's Offices (OMM/OMS) were created in 1994, through a Government Social Council agreement, as mechanisms to ensure compliance with government policies on gender equity in the various government agencies.

The National Centre for the Advancement of Women and the Family (CMF) took over coordination of these offices; but it was only in 1998, when Act No. 7801 was passed, that the CMF became the National Institute of Women (INAMU) and was given authority to promote the creation of Ministerial, Sectoral and Municipal Women's Offices, in addition to guaranteeing and coordinating their operation.

The Institute, pursuant to its assigned attributions, has proposed the goal of strengthening and consolidating these mechanisms to convert them into promoters, guides and advisers in processes for implementing gender equity policies in government agencies, ensuring gender mainstreaming in institutional planning and internal administrative processes and overseeing and supporting processes to implement national policies on gender equity in the agencies.

E. Inter-institutional commissions

The Inter-Institutional Council on Services for Teenage Mothers

The General Act for Protection of Teenage Mothers (No. 7735-1998) provides for creation of the Inter-agency Council on Services for Teenage Mothers, consisting of government institutions such as ministries and autonomous bodies, with representation from NGOs. INAMU holds the technical Secretariat of the Council, from which position it monitors compliance with current regulations (the General Act for Protection of Teenage Mothers and the Code on Childhood and Adolescence).

Statistics

The National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) is the body responsible for statistical activities in Costa Rica. Despite resource constraints, there is a developed infrastructure and technical level as regards national statistics.

INAMU has developed a strategic partnership with INEC together with public universities in order to establish a pilot study to measure the use of time and quantify the value of the work done by women at home. In addition, specific coordination has been established with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support implementation of the Gender Indicators project, which has been designed in stages. Nonetheless, continued progress is needed to ensure that information is available with a gender breakdown in order to move forward with an efficient indicator system.

Cuba

Institutional development

The Cuban national mechanism for the advancement of women, responsible for following up and implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and subsequently orchestrating the corresponding National Action Plan, is the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), a non-governmental organization (NGO) granted special consultative status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

In addition to a National Committee, FMC has provincial and municipal committees. The organization is self-financed from its members' dues. In carrying out its task of promoting policies and programmes, it coordinates with the sector ministries responsible for the implementation of projects that favour the integration of women into the country's economic, political and social life, with due allowance for the gender perspective.

The women's organization has encouraged cooperation with the agencies of the Central Administration of the State and other institutions and organizations of Cuban civil society in the development of large-scale programmes for the general advancement of women, their entry into the labour market, education, health and culture, and for the dissemination and promotion of positive values in family relations and in the new generations, through agreements and joint action plans.

Joint action plans have been agreed between the FMC and the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI). Similar plans have been agreed with the Sugar Ministry (MINAZ), the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA), the Ministry of Fisheries (MINP) in four Cuban provinces, the Ministry of Light Industry (MINIL) and the Ministry of Internal Trade (MINCIN).

The FMC has assisted with the gender training of the experts and officials of government and non-governmental entities are working closely together for the advancement of women in every area. There are special counselling programmes.

Other mechanisms providing support on gender issues

- The Women's Affairs Department Programme, whose chief task is to spread the gender approach across university teaching, research and extramural studies. Established in 1990 at the initiative of the FMC, these departments address gender disparities in education.
- The FMC's Centre for Women's Studies (CEM) carves out and promotes research into the gender approach, methodologically coordinates the work of the women's affairs departments and, jointly with the Ministry of Higher Education, helps to institutionalize the gender approach in university teaching.
- The FMC's Women and Family Counselling Centres, which are linked with the women's affairs departments, provide services, both individual and collective, for women, families and the community. The centres provide spaces for discussion and guidance promoting just and fair relations.
- The National Sex Education Centre (CENESEX) arose out of the continuous need to improve the national education system since it was considered important to include in the curricula various topics related to sex education.
- The FMC coordinates the National Group for the Prevention and Treatment of Violence in the Family and the National Family Group.
- The Cuban Network of Institutions for the Support of Rural Women conducts activities for achieving a correct gender approach in all directions, and from school onwards a continuous scientific effort is made to promote a non-sexist and non-exclusive education through the teaching process, textbooks and extracurricular activities. Eventually this has enabled the school to impress these approaches on the family.

Chile

Institutional Development

A milestone in demonstrating the political commitment of the national authorities and officials has been the creation of the Council of Ministers on Equal Opportunity, which was established in 2000 by presidential decree. Establishment of this Council has legitimized and consolidated the incorporation of the gender focus into government policies, and it now offers a forum for coordinating strategies in this area among the various ministries. That political commitment finds expression in the Ministerial Commitments for Equal Opportunities made each year by every ministry represented in the Council.

Another significant step forward in promoting gender issues within the government was the decision to incorporate a gender focus into the budgetary instruments of the Ministry of Finance, in particular, the competitively-allocated Incentives Fund, which is a budgetary tool for financing innovative initiatives in government, and the Management Improvement Programme (PMG). The PMG programme embraces a number of systems relating to policy definition in the area of modernizing government activity.

One of these systems is the "gender equity system", the purpose of which is to ensure that public agencies reflect the gender focus in practice and that they take action so that their products will reach men and women equitably. This programme, which is coordinated by the Ministry of Finance and for which SERNAM is the oversight body, is being implemented in the period 2002 to 2005.

A process has been launched to incorporate gender criteria into the official statistics of public agencies, in coordination with the National Statistics Institute (INE), and to provide information on the status of women and men nationwide through joint SERNAM and INE publications (48).

Dominica

Institutional Development

As regards the establishment of national gender-mainstreaming mechanisms, the Government has proposed public policy initiatives for the eradication of poverty by the agencies responsible for planning and the formulation of national social policies. The aim is to strengthen comprehensively the social and cultural role of the citizen by promoting gender equality and the sexual and reproductive rights of women. Concerning legislation and amendments to the criminal code, mention must be made of the Act on Sexual Offences (1998) that is still awaiting approval by the Government and which contains an action plan for gender mainstreaming in public policies and programmes at the sectoral and national level.

There is still a need to strengthen the national mechanisms for the advancement of women, furthering their institutional integration and developing large-scale programmes for a comprehensive promotion of their status, their employment, education and basic health. It is necessary to set up specific cross-cutting and inter-sectoral mechanisms responsible for building the gender perspective into State plans and programmes and offering technical assistance for their statutory implementation. The nationwide implementation of public policies on gender requires also the introduction of citizen-participation mechanisms and service networks.

Ecuador

Institutional Development

Article 41 of the 1998 Constitution of Ecuador establishes the obligation of the State to formulate and implement policies to ensure equal opportunities for women and men through a specialized agency that shall see to the incorporation of a gender focus in State plans and programmes and offer technical assistance for their obligatory implementation. Article 254 stipulates that the national planning system shall take into account age, ethno-cultural and local and regional differences and shall incorporate a gender focus.

The establishment of the National Council for Women (CONAMU) was the starting point for the process of consolidating the institutional status of gender in the country. CONAMU was created by Executive Decree No. 764, published in the Official Register, issue No. 182, on October 28, 1997, as the body in charge of formulating and promoting government policies with a gender perspective. It enjoys independent legal status, with its own capital and administrative and financial regime, and operates directly with the Office of the President of the Republic. It is the body responsible for regulating the introduction of the gender perspective into plans, programmes and projects and its enforcement in all public sector entities.

One of the most important features of CONAMU's modus operandi is the composition of its Board of Directors. It includes delegates of the State and of national organizations forming part of the women's movement, thereby setting an example of joint civil society and State responsibility in working out general guidelines for Ecuador's gender equity policies.

The establishment of CONAMU has been accompanied by the creation of other bodies that are also designed to oversee observance of human rights and of the constitutional precepts of equal protection of law and non-discrimination.

One example of the institutional status accorded to gender concerns is the Congressional Commission on Women's Issues, Children and the Family established in 1998 as a Special Commission, then elevated in August of that year, by constitutional mandate, to the rank of Permanent Specialized Legislative Commission, charged with legislating and overseeing compliance with the rights of children, adolescents, women, youth, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities. Also in 1998, a women and children's division was formed in the Office of the Ombudsman as a specialized mechanism to protect the human rights of women. However, its status today is only that of a Directorate.

Mention should be made of the 1998 constitutional amendments which led to amendments to the national legislation and the promotion of changes from the perspective of gender equality and women's rights.

- Reform proposals were put forward for the following areas of legislation: the Social Security Act, the Health Code, the Draft General Law of Education, the Higher Education Act, the Elections Act, the Political Parties Act and the Labour Code. Work was also done on a proposed amendment to the draft Code of Criminal Procedures. In particular, amendments were introduced regarding procedures and proof in cases of rape.
- The Political Participation Forum drafted a set of proposals regarding various pieces of legislation. The only ones passed were those regarding amendments to the Elections Act that, required at least 30 percent participation by women on electoral lists for elective positions, with a formula for gradually raising that participation in increments of 5 percent until parity is reached.
- The Forum on Violence drafted the bill on institutionalizing women's commissariats, their transition to the Judicial Function, the strategy for negotiating with the Executive, and the regulations implementing Act 103.
- The Family Code bill was drafted, incorporating the gender perspective as a cross-cutting theme of its rules and regulations and specially introducing the subject of domestic violence in the chapters on rights and duties, the responsibilities and duties of parents toward their children and grounds for divorce.

Much progress has been made in Ecuador in generating opportunities or mechanisms for inter-agency coordination on gender equity issues. In the various technical areas covered by CONAMU, that strategy has been pursued in order to ensure processes in which the outcomes are the fruit of consensus-building with the key governmental and non-governmental players.

- The various technical areas of CONAMU (Education, Health, Development, the Environment, Decentralization and Violence) have set up coordination mechanisms in the various technical

and political spheres, such as negotiating tables, pro-gender equity networks, gender committees, gender directorates, women's offices and consultations with gender experts on sectoral topics.

- The core of CONAMU's current (2004-2008) strategy is to continue the process of institutionalizing gender in government policies from a cross-cutting and inter-sectoral standpoint.
- The priority items on the Council's current agenda are (49):
 - Drafting the New (2004) Gender Pact, by formulating, designing and executing the new (2004-2008) Equal Opportunities Plan.
 - Helping to forge democratic governance with a gender perspective; in other words, a participatory and inclusive democracy facilitating the political, social, and community-based participation of women. It is essential to strengthen the institutional status of gender at the governmental level in order to increase the chances of having an impact on the government agenda and the National Budget, thereby advancing the promotion, protection, exercise, and mandatory recognition of women's rights.
 - Strengthening policies specifically targeting protection of rural women and at-risk groups.
 - Implementing simultaneously the measures, mechanisms and services required to put governmental gender policies into effect.
 - Ensuring that gender-related government policies can be implemented through service networks and citizen-participation mechanisms.

Main obstacles

One of the chief hurdles is the dearth of funds in sector budgets for action on gender issues. Another obstacle is the short supply of qualified specialists in the line ministries. Accordingly, CONAMU has, in its projects, invested in awareness-raising and training of those responsible for deciding on and operating government policies related to gender and women's rights.

El Salvador

Institutional development

The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women (ISDEMU) is the national mechanism that was set up and tasked by legislative decree with the formulation, management and execution of the National Policy on Women and with monitoring compliance with it. The fact that its governing body consists of representatives of the highest level of Government makes it possible to sponsor action to foster gender equality and to create national machinery to make sure that such action is efficacious. Mention should be made of the following bodies.

- Commission for evaluating and following up on the National Policy on Women
- Commission for monitoring the National Policy on Women
- Inter-agency Legal Commission
- Commission of representatives of the agencies implementing the National Policy on Women (PNM)
- Inter-agency Commission for the Prevention of and Protection from Domestic Violence
- The Commission for the Family, Women and Children of the Legislative Assembly.

The delegation of El Salvador to the Inter-American Commission for Women of the Organization of American States (OAS) supports initiatives aimed at the implementation of the provisions of the Belem Do Para Convention.

Focal points have been established for the areas covered by the National Policy on Women. They are responsible for incorporating gender equity in their respective public agendas. It is important to draw attention to the creation and operation of gender units or focal points in the Technical Committee for Institutional Planning which ensures that gender mainstreaming is included in management activities.

The Ministry of Health has implemented programmes to prevent physical abuse and to promote self-medication as well as programmes offering sexual, reproductive and nutritional education, and programmes on disease prevention and rehabilitation.

Other forms of cooperation encourage the inclusion of gender equality in activities promoting rural women's participation in productive work, such as the departmental gender advisory networks consisting of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which help to implement regional projects.

In order to build capacity for promoting gender mainstreaming, ISDEMU has concentrated on training and technical assistance. The main challenge lies in ensuring that successive Governments and their administrative authorities at various levels have an open-minded and therefore supportive attitude to the subject.

The General Directorate of Statistics and Censuses furnishes a wealth of sex-disaggregated data from its annual Multipurpose Household Survey, which make it possible to calculate highly specific indicators of progress in various areas. Sectoral statistics compiled by ministries are also sex-disaggregated and quantify a variety of situations related to gender equity.

Monitoring indicators of the plan of action for the implementation of the National Policy on Women are reflected in the annual management reports presented to decision-making bodies. One of the principal challenges is the further strengthening of the system for monitoring the indicators of the plan of action.

At present, the education and health sectors are displaying the greatest progress in statistics disaggregated according to sex and gender mainstreaming. This is due to a greater awareness of the need for a better way of recording progress towards gender equity. Similarly, social and economic indicators are gathered and analysed by the Presidential Commission for Social Affairs.

The Legislative Assembly is the Government body responsible for passing laws which contribute to improving harmonious relations and well-being for the population. Within the Assembly, the Commission on Families, Women and Children sponsors laws in keeping with social reality and especially aimed at improving the status of Salvadoran women.

Some of the subjects that are currently being considered by this legislative commission are related to gender-focused budgets. Some newly approved provisions of the Labour Code, such as the elimination of the pregnancy test for women seeking employment, deal with discrimination against women.

Guatemala

Institutional development

National public-sector mechanisms are as follows:

- Department for the Advancement and Training of Working Women, within the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, created under Ministerial Agreement 11-94.
- National Office for Women's affairs, created under Legislative Agreement 24-06-81 at the Ministry of the Interior.
- Gender Equity Office of the National Civil Police, by general order 04-2002;
- At the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, the Women's Comprehensive Health Consultative Council, created under Ministerial Agreement SP-M-977-201.
- At the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, the Gender, Women and Youth Unit.
- At the Ministry of Education, the Girls' Programme under Ministerial Resolution 6607-96, the Women's and Girls' Consultative Council, created under Ministerial Agreement 754-02.
- At the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Gender, Women and Rural Youth Unit, under Ministerial Agreement No. 1525-2000.
- At the Ministry of Culture and Sports, the Ethnic and Gender Equality Promotion Unit.
- At the Ministry of Energy and Mines, the Gender Unit.
- At the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Women's Section, under Legislative Agreement No. 37-87 on the Public Prosecutor's Office (Organization) Act.
- At the First Lady's Social Work Secretariat, under Agreement No. 893-91, the Programme for the Advancement of Rural Women under Legislative Agreement No. 356-96 and the Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Domestic Violence under Legislative Agreement No. 929-29.
- At the Peace Secretariat, the Coordinating Commission for the Women's Forum under Legislative Agreement No. 744-97 and the National Women's Forum under Legislative Agreement No. 105-98.
- At the Presidential Secretariat for Planning, the Women's Consultative Council, under Internal agreement No. 088-2002.
- At the Presidential Secretariat for Executive Coordination, the Presidential Secretariat for Women under Legislative Agreement No. 200-2000 and the National Coordinating Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women under Legislative Agreement 868-2000.
- At the Presidential Coordinating Office for Human Rights Policy, the Office for the Defence of Indigenous Women's Rights, under Legislative Agreement No. 525-99.
- At the Departmental Administration of Guatemala, Women's Area, under Internal Agreement No. 02-2002.
- At the Guatemalan Fund for Indigenous Development, the Women's Unit of the Guatemalan Fund for Indigenous Development, under Founding Agreement No. 01-2001.
- At the Land Trust Fund, the Rural Women's Unit (in the process of being created).
- At the Social Investment Fund (in operation, pending the publication of the Founding Agreement).
- At the Universidad San Carlos de Guatemala, the university gender-studies programme, under the base document for the creation of the Department of Research programme 23/06/1,994.
- At the Office of the Human Rights Procurator, the Office for the Defence of Women's Human Rights, under Agreement SG-04-9f.
- At the Office of the Procurator-General, the Women's Unit, under Decree No. 97-96; and the National Women's Platform (pending officialization), made up of the three branches of government (Executive, Legislature and Judiciary) and the Presidential Commission to Combat Discrimination and Racism under Legislative Agreement 6-2003.

Each of these mechanisms has different functions depending on its sector, and all work together, since they make up SEPREM's Advisory Board. Various projects, plans and programmes have been implemented in support of ethnic and gender equality in the respective political, technical, administrative and service processes of the particular mechanisms. Not all of them are decision-making bodies, but those that are high up in the structure, near the chief authority, have greater influence on the development of plans. Their resources, both human and financial, vary.

No measurement processes are provided. However, there are mechanisms whereby, in developing plans, action has been taken to introduce a gender perspective. The following are worthy of mention:

- In 2002, the National Office for Women's Affairs carried out the following seven projects:
 - (1) Strengthening the National Office for Women's Affairs
 - (2) Supporting public policies relating to women
 - (3) Activities on women and peace-building, democracy and development
 - (4) Activities on women and legal reforms
 - (5) Teaching rural women about current agricultural legislation
 - (6) Labour reforms relating to women
 - (7) Activities on the importance of participation in the national dialogue.

In 2003, three projects were carried out:

- (1) Proposed amendments to the Labour Code relating to women
 - (2) Helping boys and girls to know their rights
 - (3) Eradicating domestic child labour.
- The Department for the Advancement and Training of Working Women of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security is working on a project for the promotion and defence of the labour rights of working women.
 - At the Gender, Women and Rural Youth Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, a gender equity policy was developed that is applied to projects carried out in all agencies of the Ministry.
 - The Gender Unit in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources has provided training on topics related to gender theory as it applies to environmental issues.
 - The Gender Equity Office in the National Civil Police, of the Ministry of the Interior, is working on themes of domestic violence, sexual violence, AIDS prevention and masculinity. It has also established a system for monitoring sex disaggregated statistical data relating to various issues.
 - The Women's Consultative Council in the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (MSPAS) is responsible for mainstreaming a gender perspective in all health-related activities.
 - The Gender, Women and Rural Youth Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAGA) promotes the 2000-2004 agricultural policy, the aim of which is to reduce injustice and achieve equality of rights between women and men in access to productive resources, organizational capacity and job opportunities.

- The Gender and Armed Forces Project in the Ministry of Defence promotes and formulates discussion, analysis and consultation on mainstreaming a gender perspective within the various branches of the military.
- The Unit on Promotion and Ethnic and Gender Equity in Cultural Diversity at the Ministry of Culture and Sports promotes ethnic and gender equity in all services that the Ministry provides.
- The Gender Unit of the Ministry of Economic Affairs Activities has undertaken activities to benefit small and medium enterprises, a sector in which women are strongly represented.
- The Social Investment Fund, an autonomous State agency, has defined a strategic focus for the purpose of gender mainstreaming in the investment processes implemented by the Fund.
- The Women's Advisory Board in the Presidential (General) Secretariat for Planning and Programming (SEGEPLAN) was established in 2003. The Presidential Secretariat for Women has managed to incorporate a gender-based classification into the system of financial administration in 2003. In the current year, that classification will be adopted by the municipalities of the Republic.
- The Women's Consultative Council in the Ministry of Education promotes activities to raise awareness of gender equity among the central and departmental authorities of the Ministry. It has managed to have the target of gender equity incorporated in the curriculum outlines.

Proposals have been presented for the National Public Investment System] and the National Investment Funding System providing for the inclusion of the gender perspective in government projects.

The Presidential Secretariat for Women has developed 101 indicators on the status of women, corresponding to the thrusts of the National Policy for the Advancement and Development of Guatemalan Women and the Equal Opportunities Plan (2001-2006). In formulating these, SEPREM obtained information from each of the local administrations, which generated statistical data disaggregated by sex. INE's limitation in this context has been its weak innovative capacity. The process has been carried out with the participation of the priority Ministries, with the support of INE technical staff, who validated the indicators.

The goal is to institutionalize these indicators and to have each of the sectors use them. SEPREM's role is to monitor the use of the indicators.

Honduras

Institutional development

The creation of institutional mechanisms is directly related to the formulation, promotion and implementation of public policies on gender, including specific legislation on gender issues, as follows:

- The Act establishing the National Institute for Women (INAM) confers on INAM a mandate to secure "the full integration [of women] in the sustainable development process on the basis of gender equality both in social and in economic, political and cultural affairs". This mandate was reinforced by the adoption of the Equal Opportunities Act for Women, which stipulates the

State's responsibility for formulating and executing public policies in the fields of health, education, environment, culture, communication, employment and social security, means of production, and involvement of women in decision-making within the structures of power. All of this derives from the binding international commitments signed and ratified by Honduras, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), supplemented by the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

- There are institutional mechanisms for the design, implementation and monitoring of policies for the advancement of women: the National Congress Commission on Women, the Inter-agency Commission on Children and the Family, the gender units in central and decentralized public bodies, the Gender Equality Panel, the Inter-agency Technical Committee on Gender Issues, the Forum on Gender and the Economy and the municipal women's offices
- Mention must be made of a study on the institutional gender framework in the State, which includes a proposal for a system for mainstreaming gender perspectives on a cross-cutting basis in the public sector, which is still on the table (50).

Main obstacles

Structural:

- The poverty of most of the country's population, which impedes civic participation.
- Assignment of very few budgetary resources for the operation of the institutional mechanisms, which limits their capacity to respond to the demands received.

Institutional:

- Little awareness of and scant attention given to the National Policy for Women and the international agreements and treaties both in macro- and micro-processes and in the institutions of the branches of State government and in the local authorities, which restricts the role of the relevant agencies in giving effect to gender-equality measures.
- Lack of strengthened institutions with sufficient human and financial resources to attain the targets which have been set under the international treaties and agreements relating to women and girls signed and ratified by Honduras.
- The tendency for measures to be discontinued when the Government changes, which makes it difficult to develop institutional coordination with constant feedback and an effective presence vis-à-vis the State.
- Lack of a nationwide set of gender positions in strategic agencies which have a role to play in the determination of national priorities and the adoption of binding plans.

Socio-economic and political:

- Scant involvement of women in political affairs. According to the *Human Development Report 2002*, women's representation in the National Congress is barely 8.6 percent, and they take little part in other decision-making forums.
- Failure of the country's various sectors to take the women's agenda on board as a means of helping to reduce the existing inequalities.
- Resurgence of sexist attitudes.

Mexico

Institutional development

The 2001-2006 National Development Plan (PND) defines equity as a primary concern of the current Government, and as one of the guiding principles on which federal government action is founded. It also provides for creation of the National Institute of Women (INMUJERES) with a mandate, under criteria of gender mainstreaming in public policies, to develop programmes and activities that strengthen the links with legislative and judicial powers at both federal and state level (xx).

The fact that INMUJERES forms part of the federal government's broader cabinet made it possible to reach inter-ministerial consensus on the National Agreement on Equity, in which ministries undertake to fulfil the objectives of PROEQUIDAD and build them into their programmes and policies. Given the characteristics of PROEQUIDAD, the national mechanism established the Inter-agency Board for Gender Dialogue.

Other mechanisms have also facilitated the promotion of equality between men and women. They include the Commissions on Equity and Gender in both chambers of the National Congress. At the local level, all states of the Republic (31 states and the Federal District) have an Equity and Gender Commission, or a similar body, in their respective congresses.

In terms of supervision and accountability mechanisms, in June 2002 the Federal Act on Transparency and Access to Public Government Information entered into force.

At the organizational structure level, activities have been carried out by the Gender Units of the Ministries of Economic Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Social Development, Labour and Social Security, Health, and Environment and Natural Resources.

Other coordination arrangements implemented by the national mechanism include: the National Coordination of Documentation Centres Specializing in Women and Gender Issues; the National Coordination of Former Municipal Presidents; the Coordination of Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women in the Federal States; the Permanent Agenda for Dialogue with Civil Society; the Board for Technical-Judicial Monitoring of the Investigation of Cases of Women Murdered in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua; and the Institutional Board for the Coordination of Preventive Action and Services in Cases of Domestic Violence against Women.

In 2003, a project entitled "Institutional Culture and Gender Equity in Public Administration: a diagnostic tool" was initiated. The results will be published in May 2004.

The national mechanism has also signed 13 cooperation agreements with state governments, in order to maintain the level and strengthen state women's mechanisms; 21 agreements with APF sections; eight agreements with academic institutions; and two with national mechanisms for the advancement of women in other countries (El Salvador and Guatemala).

The establishment of INMUJERES cleared the way for a comprehensive awareness-raising and training process aimed at generating multiplier action to institutionalize and mainstream the gender perspective.

The National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information (INEGI) is responsible for generating and integrating statistical information on the national socio-demographic reality and providing it to public-sector bodies from government sectors and society at large in order to

underpin decision-making and the design of public policies for the development and welfare of the population.

The national mechanism is responsible for a periodic and systematic evaluation of the implementation of PROEQUIDAD, and has authority to commission studies and research aimed at implementing systems of information, promoting the creation of various measurement systems and mechanisms.

INMUJERES signed a framework agreement with INEGI in June 2001 for the preparation and execution of programmes and projects to facilitate continuous development of statistics with a gender perspective, within the national statistical information system.

Work on statistics with a gender perspective has yielded various results, including:

- The System of Indicators for Follow-Up Regarding the Situation of Women in Mexico (SISESIM) (xxi)
- The Interactive System for Monitoring the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (SICEDAW) (xxii)
- The State System of Gender Indicators (SEIG)
- The Indicator System for Follow-Up on International Conferences
- The National Survey on the Dynamics of Family Relations
- Survey on the Use of Time
- Urban Survey of Remuneration and the Cost of Labour
- Guidelines for Budgetary Analysis.

Within this framework, INMUJERES collaborates with INEGI and UNIFEM to organize the annual International Seminar on Statistics with a Gender Perspective. In addition, Regional Laboratories for the Development of Evaluation and Impact Indicators were developed to evaluate processes for gender mainstreaming in programmes and projects.

As regards civil society organizations (CSOs), the following points must be mentioned:

- The current government established a Presidential Coordination Unit for Citizen Partnership, to provide for ongoing CSO support for the government's work. Since then, a network of consultative councils has been set up in ministries and government bodies, in fulfilment of a commitment to incorporate citizen's views in the government structure. Various agencies work in consultation with CSOs in the design and implementation of government programmes.
- More specifically, the key measures on women's rights and the promotion of legal reforms, in the analysis and discussion of which many CSOs participated, include legal amendments on penal and civil issues relating to intrafamily violence and sexual offences, and the creation of a support network to deal with cases that require specialized attention by the Coordinating Office of the Programme on Women, Children and the Family, of the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH).
- Since 2000 various CSOs have carried out substantial research leading to the creation of a methodological instrument for the analysis of public budgets with a gender perspective. The results of this research have largely been taken up by the Commission on Equity and Gender of the Chamber of Deputies in order to influence the federal budget.

- Civil society has played a far-reaching role in consolidating the Family Planning Programme in Mexico. In this framework, the National Centre for Gender Equity and Reproductive Health supports readjustment projects, especially on the prevention of domestic violence and providing care services to the victims.
- SEMARNAT and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) also have mechanisms facilitating participation and institutional communication with civil society.

The legal framework of the national mechanism for the advancement of women ensures participation by organized civil society through its consultative and social councils, in which CSOs participate with voice and vote on the Board of Directors.

The Commission on Government Human Rights Policy, established in 2002 under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior (SEGOB) to coordinate all APF human rights activities, has CSO participation through thematic dialogue boards.

The National Women's Assembly, created in 1998 as a bicameral commission of female legislators from the Senate of the Republic and the Federal Chamber of Deputies, is a mechanism for analysis and exchange of experiences to promote and integrate a national legislative agenda aimed at eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination.

In terms of financing for productive and social projects, mention should be made of the National Microenterprise Finance Programme (PRONAFIM), the Rural Women's Microfinance Fund (FOMMUR), the National Fund for the Support of Social Enterprises (FONAES), attached to the Ministry of Economic Affairs (xxiii), the Agrarian Sector Women's Programme (PROMUSAG) and the National Communal Land Trust Fund (FIFONAFE), through the programme to finance agrarian development aimed at indigenous peasant women's groups, both attached to the Ministry of Agrarian Reform.

Nicaragua

Institutional Development

The Nicaraguan Institute for Women (INIM) was created by Decree 293 of 22 December 1987, as a body attached to the Office of the President of the Republic. In 1993, the INIM Organic Law was approved through Decree 36-93, defining this institution as a decentralized body of indefinite duration, with legal status, its own assets, full capacity to acquire rights and enter into obligations, and technical-functional autonomy.

Pursuant to its Organic Law, INIM has defined its mission as "to guide the formulation, promotion, implementation and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects to promote gender equity in Nicaraguan society."

Activities carried out by INIM in the last few years include the following:

- Creation of the Inter-Institutional Commission for Women and Rural Development (CIMYDR)
- Coordination of the process of formulating the Policy Declaration on Gender Equity and Action Plans in the majority of public agriculture-sector institutions
- Formulation of the National Plan for the Prevention of Intrafamily and Sexual Violence, 2001-2006, in follow-up to the National Commission on Violence
- Formulation of the 2002-2006 Strategic Plan of the Nicaraguan Institute for Women

- Participation on various inter-sectoral commissions to promote and facilitate equal opportunities between women and men
- Through INIM, implementation of a process to build awareness on gender mainstreaming in decision-making as an indicator of democracy, for senior management in political and business organizations, labour unions, trade associations, NGOs and civil servants.

INIM, which is responsible for gender mainstreaming in the National Development Plan (PND) and public policies, and for working toward the reduction of gender inequalities, has promoted an institutional strengthening process and defined a strategic framework for 2007 targeting the following outcomes:

- Strengthening of women's capacities, and those of local and municipal decision-making mechanisms.
- Supporting changes in legal and administrative regulations aimed at strengthening gender equity
- Strengthening coordination with the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) in generating and disseminating gender-sensitive official statistics
- Promoting gender mainstreaming in public policies and institutionalization processes nationally and locally.
- Promoting synergy between national efforts and international cooperation on public policies conducive to gender equity.

The following outcomes have been achieved by INIM in the framework of the project entitled "Support for the implementation of public policies with a gender perspective":

- Establishment of roundtables on priority topics (health, violence, education, poverty and the economy) at national level
- Organization of a postgraduate course on "Gender in Statistics"
- Heading a national task force to produce a profile of the Nicaraguan economy in the process of liberalization and free trade agreements, as part of the regional project prompted by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). This will serve as an input for the work of the recently established Council of Central American Women Ministers, and its positioning vis-à-vis the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Permanent Secretariat of the General "Treaty on Central American Economic Integration (SIECA).

Paraguay

Institutional development

As regards institutional mechanisms promoting gender equity, mention must be made of the Women's Bureau of the Office of the President of the Republic: it is the State body responsible for coordinating policies on gender equality.

The creation of other public bodies that have gender equity among their main aims is a sign of consolidating the institutional status of gender in the State. Such bodies include the Senate Commission on Equity, Gender and Development, the Gender and Social Equity Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, the Gender Office of the Supreme Court, and the Advisory Gender and Equity Commission in the Municipality of Asuncion. There are also Women's Bureaus in the country's 17 departments; and, increasingly, municipalities are establishing mechanisms of the type at the local level.

Puerto Rico

Institutional development

For the first time in the history of Puerto Rico, a woman, Sila María Calderón, holds the office of Governor and is the highest official in the country. Furthermore, she has appointed a woman to be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico. Currently, the country has women representatives in city councils, the legislature and the Chamber of Deputies.

The Office of the Procurator for Women was established with the adoption of Act No. 20 of 11 April 2001 and it was given investigative, prosecutorial and quasi-judicial powers to implement the government policy guaranteeing the full development and observance of the human rights of women in the exercise of their fundamental freedoms. That law replaced the law that had established the Commission for Women's Affairs in 1973, and transferred the Commission's funds, equipment and personnel to the new Office of the Procurator. It should be noted that the establishment of this agency was the result of coordinated work with the country's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and that the recommendations in the NGO Plan of Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women served as the basis.

Since no national plan of action was drawn up, this area has been addressed thanks to the support and the collaborative efforts of NGOs and the women's movement in the private sector. Since the establishment of the Office of the Procurator for Women and its Advisory Council comprising various community representatives, a dialogue and ongoing consultations have been initiated on the different situations that affect the development of women in Puerto Rico. There are currently about 25 NGOs that have programmes for women.

The main institutional development mechanisms are:

- Women's Affairs Offices in the cities
- the Office of the Procurator for Women.

The implementation and monitoring of established government policies, inter alia, are funded by the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico and the United States Government.

Dominican Republic

Institutional development

The most important institutional mechanism set up to promote equality between the sexes and empower women in the Dominican Republic has been the State Secretariat for Women, which was established by the promulgation of Act No. 86-99 of 11 August 1999. The State Secretariat for Women is the organization responsible for establishing standards and coordinating the implementation of policies, plans and programmes for the achievement of gender equity and the exercise of full citizenship by women

As regards support for the follow-up to the implementation of the Platform for Action of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (Beijing +5), the Secretariat's functions are as follows:

- To coordinate and carry out activities between sectors and in conjunction with civil society to give effect to the Dominican Republic's international agreements and commitments, which aim to put in place the necessary conditions for empowerment of women in society and in all spheres of public and private life through full and equal participation.
- To monitor, evaluate and report to national and international bodies on progress in and obstacles to the fulfilment of the said agreements and commitments by the Dominican Republic.
- To make the appropriate recommendations and do the requisite coordination for the fulfilment of the Dominican Republic's international agreements and commitments.

The State Secretariat for Women has provincial and municipal offices for women (OPMs and OPMMs) throughout the Republic.

In 2001, Gender Equity and Development Offices were set up. Their mission is to ensure gender mainstreaming in public policies in each of the State bodies where they operate, and to implement the requisite mechanisms for the monitoring and follow-up of that mission.

Other valuable inter-sectoral mechanisms are:

- The Sectoral Council, made up of all State Secretaries
- The Consultative Council, made up of representatives of the public sector and civil society
- The Linkage Council: a forum for participation by women's organizations and the State Secretariat for Women (SEM), with a representative of the former directors of the Department for the Advancement of Women (DGPM) and the former Secretaries.

Act No. 86-99 provides that SEM shall operate with resources from the Income Budget and the Law on Public Expenditure and with contributions from international organizations and donations from the public and private sectors.

Suriname

Institutional Development

The following national mechanisms are responsible for the promotion of gender equality:

- Ministry of Home Affairs, responsible for the Gender policy of the State. It initiates and coordinates that policy.
- National Bureau of Gender Policy: A Ministry of Home Affairs department, responsible for the implementation of the Gender Policy.
- Commission for Gender legislation, established by the Ministry of Home Affairs. It focuses on reviewing the national legislation on a permanent basis from a gender perspective.

Gender focal points, which also specify the activities and initiatives developed, have been designated within the Ministries of:

- Foreign affairs
- Justice and Police (Law Enforcement)
- Home Affairs
- Public Health
- Planning and Development Cooperation

- Labour, Technological Development and Environmental Natural Resources
- Regional Development
- Social Affairs and Housing (essentially providing subsidies and financial support for the implementation of plans and programmes)
- Education and Community Development
- Defence
- Trade and Industry.

These ministries have participated in the development of various specific activities in order to promote gender equity through:

- Participation in training and information workshops
- Monitoring and review of the technical and administrative procedures in force and evaluating the activities undertaken.

A regional program established for the Dutch speaking Caribbean was implemented in 1996 to develop research in the area of vocational training and undertake some activities on violence against women

In 1998 the Government established the National Bureau of Gender Policy

In 2003, a steering committee subordinate to the General Bureau of Statistics was set up. Made up of representatives of various ministries and representatives of NGOs offering to develop methods for building gender indicators and compiling sex-disaggregated statistics, it focuses on devising indicators for attaining the Millennium Development Goals. A set of indicators is currently implemented and will be presented in a report to CARICOM

The Government of Suriname is drawing up a national action plan for implementation in the next five years 2000-2005 and includes gender mainstreaming as an essential component cutting across the development policy of the Government and based on the strategic points identified under the Integral Gender Action Plan.

The Government of Suriname is committed to implementing specific programmes aimed at eradicating poverty.

Lines of action

- Research and social exploitation of information with a view to gaining insights into gender issues, particularly violence against women, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Development Cooperation and Social Affairs and in close coordination with the representatives of international organizations in Suriname.

It should be noted that, while the development of the plans and programmes necessitates joint action by the various ministries, the coordination of gender policy as a whole is mainly carried out by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which provides most of the funding.

- Implementation of the Integral Gender Action Plan. That is the main strategic activity of the Government. The implementation of the plan involves the various ministries, financial support for the development of activities and the definition of tools and mechanisms under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior. Mention should be made of the contribution of the Canada Caribbean Gender Equity Fund (CCGEF) as a donor.

Uruguay

Institutional Development

Among Uruguay's institutional mechanisms are the National Institute for Women and the Family (INFM), which was created initially as the National Institute for Women (Act No. 16.226 of October 1991) and was given its current name by Act No. 16.320 of November 1992. From the outset it has functioned as a dependency of the General Directorate of the Ministry of Education and Culture and conducts decentralized activities through agreements with its departmental representatives in women's offices or information units with which it coordinates specific initiatives.

Since its inception and until 1995, INFM was funded from the MEC budget. At that time, it was assigned its own credits in the State budget. To meet its operational needs, INFM receives from MEC a supplement to the budget allocation. Moreover, until 2000 INFM could count on funding from international organizations, and this made it possible to undertake specific research and to prepare reports for monitoring international commitments.

As of 2000, this international support was discontinued. This fact, added to the scarcity of human and material resources and the lack of interest shown by the executive branch, has prevented the INFM from playing a leading role in formulating policies for the defence of women's rights. The INFM is a member of various coordination bodies with other State agencies, such as the Ministries of Health, Labour and the Interior, but it does not have the institutional status and organizational ranking that would allow it to have a real impact on areas within its responsibility.

Uruguay has several other instruments for promoting gender equity. One example is the Tripartite Commission for Equal Opportunities and Treatment in the Workplace, set up by a founding act dated 7 March 1997 with a view to mainstreaming gender considerations within the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The Commission has undertaken various activities, such as:

- outreach campaigns
- sponsoring specific studies on the status of women in the labour market
- preparing a National Plan for Employment Equality
- promoting and supporting the preparation, design and implementation of "Promujer"
- establishing interagency relations
- monitoring the process of regional integration
- securing international funding.

Given the weakness of the gender mechanism in the executive branch of government, the National Parliament has assumed the role of coordinating efforts in the various relevant areas of government action and civil society.

With respect to the generation, publication and accessibility of statistical information disaggregated by sex, the agency responsible for preparing and supervising official information is the National Statistics Institute (INE). It should be noted that:

- Starting with the basic concepts prepared for monitoring the Programme of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), 1994 and 1999, the Beijing Platform of Action 1995 and 2000 (Beijing + 5) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), INE has managed to improve and update those concepts in light of available information and for purposes of international and regional comparisons.

- The indicators cover the following areas: population, families and households, education, employment and income, poverty, health and housing.

Venezuela

Institutional Development

The National Women's Institute (INNAMUJER) is the permanent institution for the definition, implementation, direction, coordination, supervision and evaluation of policies and matters relating to the condition and status of women. Activities carried out have promoted the establishment of regional institutes, regional councils, women's centres and shelter homes throughout the country, in order to implement measures designed by INNAMUJER in its role as governing body for public policies on gender.

In order to enhance gender equality, national and international agreements were concluded, including the following agreements between INNAMUJER and international cooperation bodies:

With the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

In 2003, INNAMUJER formulated a project in conjunction with UNICEF for the prevention of violence against women and the provision of care in that context.

With the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

In 2003, a cooperation agreement was signed to address the issue of sexual and reproductive health.

Various other government bodies coordinate relevant joint activities. They include the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports; the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance; the National Institute of Statistics; the Ministry of the Environment; the Banco del Pueblo Soberano; the Banco de la Mujer; and the Poor Rural Communities Development Project (PRODECOP).

Shortcomings persist in terms of data and statistics with a gender breakdown. Accordingly, INNAMUJER is negotiating an agreement with the National Institute of Statistics to mainstream gender in the collection of statistical data and the instruments used for this purpose. Moreover, a workshop has been held for public bodies on the preparation of gender indicators, with technical cooperation from UNFPA.

Part IV

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

Points of convergence

Interconnecting social and economic policies requires a gender-based public management model whose institutional status requires a shared vision, the development of operational methodologies, appropriate human and economic resources and the political will to transform relations of power and resistance in favour of both men and women. To that end, institutional development should be given particular emphasis in government action with a view to establishing effectively the cross-cutting character of gender issues and enabling each State to incorporate them in a single basic platform in order to draft a national plan and follow-up on it through monitoring, indicators and gender statistics.

The Governments confirm their commitments through the ratification of international treaties and conventions concerning women.

The observations listed below can be identified as points of convergence, even though the international commitments made by each country are addressed through particular measures and initiatives that the Governments propose to take as from 2005 in order to improve the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in the next five years.

Obstacles:

1. The gender perspective lacks institutional status in the public agencies, and consequently programmes and projects are designed or implemented without a gender approach.
2. The mechanisms set up by various Governments to incorporate the gender perspective in plans, programmes and projects and meet the demands of women in the areas of health, education, legislation, productive resources and services are still insufficient.
3. National statistical information systems providing sex-disaggregated data to facilitate the measurement of effects and impacts of gender-mainstreaming efforts by public and private bodies that seek to reduce inequalities are inadequate.
4. The systems of organized information processing are inadequate. There is a lack of gender-specific indicators and statistics.
5. The budgets provided for the operation of the institutional mechanisms set up are insufficient, thereby inhibiting the follow-up and monitoring of the plans and programmes implemented by the various States to promote gender equality.
6. There is a lack of technical assistance and training on gender issues to develop large-scale information and communication processes for raising awareness through activities and programmes aimed at increasing gender equality.
7. There is a lack of trained professionals and financial resources necessary for investing in gender equity, thereby affecting adversely the sustainability of activities undertaken by States.

8. The national budgets and public investment systems do not yet reflect a gender perspective.
9. Access to the labour market and income is unequal. Salary imbalances against women persist and their employment tends to be more precarious.
10. Labour codes lack provisions to eliminate discrimination against women.
11. There is a lack of laws and regulations strengthening gender equity.

Measures:

1. Defining standards and policies necessary for setting up mechanisms to fulfil State commitments to the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women.
2. Linking, coordinating and conducting activities in partnership with State agencies to ensure the implementation of gender-sensitive policies, programmes and projects and the evaluation of their results.
3. Implementing a system to ensure gender-mainstreaming across all sectors in a State through inter-connected, long-term activities as part of State policy.
4. Formulating basic gender-based platforms in strategic bodies in each State.
5. Monitoring and evaluating public policies and gender-focused laws and regulations in each State.
6. Designing tools for a gender-based public-budget analysis.
7. Disseminating information on women's contribution to the national economy, so that this contribution is taken into account in formulating public policies.
8. Strengthening the national gender-sensitive indicators and statistical systems.
9. Designing clear and precise dialogue mechanisms conducive to equitable power-sharing by men and women and to the adoption of decisions promoting women's participation in decision-making in the public and private sectors, in political, cultural, economic and social life, on an equitable basis.
10. Promoting women' comprehensive development by strengthening public policies and implementing the agreements and commitments of each Government in international conventions on women.
11. Evaluating and report to international bodies the progress made and the obstacles encountered by each State in implementing international conventions, agreements and commitments.
12. Promoting synergy between measures taken by individual States and international cooperation bodies in relation to public policies encouraging gender equity. Establishing

dialogue and ongoing consultation procedures on the various issues affecting women's development.

Goals:

1. Institutionalizing and mainstreaming the gender perspective in public policies and plans, and strengthening that process through links between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary.
2. Ensuring that gender issues are broadly addressed as State issues in the policies of the various ministries and, in particular, at the highest level of the executive branch, building the gender perspective into every national plan.
3. Promoting legal and legislative frameworks in conformity with international commitments on human rights for women and non-discrimination.
4. Building the gender perspective in the public budgets with a view to funding relevant public-administration initiatives systematically and regularly.
5. Ensuring the allocation of sufficient funds throughout public administration for the economic progress of women.
6. Ensuring women's access to and share in power and decision-making on equal terms with men by reinforcing high-level institutional structures ensuring the participation of women in political, economic and social activities.
7. Raising the participation of women - particularly those with lower incomes - in the workforce and improving women's employment indicators.
8. Using methods, tools and mechanisms for gender mainstreaming and its evaluation in public activities.
9. Using appropriate methodological instruments for gender-based public-budget analysis.
10. Devising statistics permitting to set up sex-disaggregated databases and ensuring the standardization of gender-related indicators.
11. Reducing the economic, political, social and cultural gender divide. Promoting equal opportunities between men and women through affirmative gender-based measures.

Organized presentation of the information submitted by the Governments

Argentina

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

Need to strengthen the implementation of the Platform for Action:

As a response to the problems and difficulties in applying the Platform for Action, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, acting through the Special International Office for Women's Affairs, is preparing to implement a new stage in the functioning of the Ad Hoc Committee monitoring the follow-up to the Plan of Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The work to be undertaken in this area will be based on the strategic priorities of poverty, health and institutional mechanisms for women's issues. It will promote the coordination of activities necessary to make them more effective in view of their implementation in every region of the country.

At the regional level, the MERCOSUR Special Meeting on Women (REM) led to a significant achievement in the form of a commitment made by the Heads of State of the MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile (Montevideo, 15 December 2003) to the goals and targets of women's full participation in political, economic and social life through the consolidation of high-level institutional structures such as Secretariats or Ministries for Women's Affairs.

Activities to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, especially women and girls:

A comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to this issue, based on unrestricted respect for the human rights of victims and their social reintegration, has been promoted in order to prevent, combat and eradicate this social scourge. As part of a broad interagency coordination - within each State and in the international community - the following developments in combating that crime in the Argentine Republic should be noted:

- New Migrations Act (No. 25871)
- National Commission for the Eradication of Child Labour (CONAETI)
- Action Protocol on human trafficking:
- Argentine-Dominican Binational Workshop on Human Trafficking (March 2004)
- Current consideration by the National Congress of a bill to launch a National Programme for the Prevention and Assistance for Victims of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation.

Production of gender statistics and indicators:

There are plans to take steps at the nation and the regional (MERCOSUR) level to set up a database and standardize methodologies for compiling indicators on the status of women.

Measures relating to training and labour market participation

It is essential that the holders of senior posts in the national Government - in view of their multiplier role within public administration - receive training on gender issues. The goal of achieving equitable participation by women in the higher institutional echelons must also be insisted upon.

Barbados

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

The Government of Barbados has acknowledged the critical role of women to national development and consequently established a national machinery for the advancement of women, namely the Bureau of Women's Affairs, currently the Bureau of Gender Affairs.

In 1993 the Government of Barbados received support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for building the capacities of the Bureau, ensuring policy and programme coordination and monitoring and evaluating gender-based sectoral programmes. The expansion of the Bureau's research and data collection capacity and engaging the full participation of women's NGOs were further objectives.

However, the Bureau of Gender Affairs encounters numerous challenges in fulfilling its role, including the lack of staff professionally trained on gender issues, weak institutional status and insufficient funds.

Bolivia

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

While considerable progress has been achieved in the area of gender policies, it has not been possible to eliminate inequalities and inequities, nor have governments fully espoused those policies. Nevertheless, one of the achievements is having a unit responsible for addressing women's concerns - since the creation of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Gender Affairs in 1993. Nowadays, that role is performed by the Vice-Ministry for Women.

The Vice-Ministry for Women is a public agency cooperating closely with public and private bodies to formulate policies and standards; promote knowledge; provide training and technical assistance; develop information and mass communication campaigns and specific programmes to promote gender equity and equal opportunities and supervise their implementation; and ensure gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies and plans at the various levels of public administration and oversee their application.

The goals of the Vice-Ministry for Women's for 2004-2007 are:

- To help narrow gender-related inequity gaps in the economic, political, social and cultural areas jointly with other government agencies and civil society.
- To ensure decentralized implementation, at the departmental and municipal level, of policies, plans and programmes that incorporate a gender focus tailored to local circumstances.
- To improve the quality of services designed to prevent gender-related violence, assist with the treatment and recovery of its victims and punish the perpetrators.
- To foster economic practices targeting women and men and aimed at raising their incomes, improving working conditions and broadening access to and control of financial resources.

The greatest challenge that the country faces, and one that hits women hardest, is the current economic plight, with the concomitant lack of employment and declining incomes that are forcing women to eke out a living in highly precarious jobs.

Costa Rica

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

The INAMU agenda prioritizes the strengthening of institutional governing capacity through:

- The development of an institutional approach in favour of cultural change and women's human rights that guides the action undertaken by INAMU and the State, conceptually and politically, towards eradication of the patterns on which discrimination and violence against women are founded.
- The strengthening of the political, regulatory and planning framework to guarantee that national policy on gender equality and equity is assumed as a comprehensive commitment by the State.
- The design, feedback, consensus and institutionalization of national policy on gender equality and equity along the strategic lines of action in the following areas to ensure full exercise of women's rights:
 - Women's citizenship
 - Women's economic rights
 - Women's sexuality
 - Autonomous life projects for girls, teenagers and young people
 - Gender violence
- Building INAMU capacities, enabling the Institute to fulfil its mandate and leading role through transparent technical and administrative management based on shared responsibility.

Institutional targets

Institutional targets for strengthening INAMU's leading role, carried out through transparent technical and administrative management based on shared responsibility:

1. An institutional strategy aimed at changing socio-cultural patterns that foster and perpetuate gender discrimination designed, implemented and evaluated.
2. The State System for Gender Equality and Equity (SEIEG) installed, with mechanisms at the national and regional level working on the coordination, promotion, monitoring and evaluation of national policy on gender equality and equity.
3. National policy on gender equality and equity formulated, implemented and evaluated at the local, regional and national level, and coordinated around the following strategic areas: women's citizenship; women's economic rights, women's sexuality, autonomous life projects for girls, adolescents and young people, and gender violence.
4. A platform of institutional services for the promotion and protection of women's rights designed, implemented with specialized staff and service protocols, and periodically evaluated.
5. The National Institute of Women strengthened in its legal, planning and budgetary framework.

Cuba

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

In its comments, the CEDAW Committee of Experts has acknowledged the adverse effects of the Helms Burton Act and the economic, trade and financial embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States Government on the full implementation of the Convention and the Platform for Action. As a result of those measures, that implementation requires additional efforts.

Despite that situation, which has been further aggravated by the still serious repercussions of the collapse of the socialist bloc in Eastern Europe and the current difficult and complex international economic climate, Cuba continues to apply its survival, resistance and development strategy, in every area of economic, political and social life. There has been further progress with the restructuring of the economy, and new ways and means of mitigating the adverse effects, optimizing the use of material, financial and human resources and safeguarding what has been achieved have been devised.

The country is still faced with the challenge of working to change people's attitudes the roles of men and women in society. This is a process, taking place at both public and private levels, in which education and everyday practice play a decisive part and all the social factors are involved.

Work is also proceeding on the introduction of ever more comprehensive indicators and statistics in order to make it possible to establish the precise situation of women in and particular place and at any particular time. Continuing efforts are being made to improve women's access to managerial positions in order further to extend their participation in and influence on decision-making.

The country also wants to go on working with the United Nations and the international community to promote the social advancement of women, as called for at the Beijing Conference and other summits and meetings.

Chile

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

Priority areas for government action in coming years:

- The Equal Opportunities Plan for Women, 2000-2010 is the key instrument of gender equity policies. In setting out the principal guidelines for action during the decade, it gives priority to the following six areas:
 - Promoting a culture of equality
 - Promoting women's rights and ensuring their full exercise
 - Ensuring women's participation in power structures and decision-making processes
 - Ensuring the economic independence for women and reducing poverty
 - Improving the day-to-day well-being and the quality of life
 - Introducing the gender perspective in public policies

- For the years 2004-2006 in particular, SERNAM will pursue the following lines of action:
 - Institutionalizing the gender focus in public policies.
 - Strengthening women's participation in civic affairs and in relations with the State.
 - Promoting women's participation in politics and decision-making.
 - Making women participating in social organizations aware of their rights relating to sexual and reproductive health, and the prevention of family violence.
 - In relation to legal reforms, monitoring progress of draft bills, in particular those on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, Family Courts, Intrafamily Violence, Mothers' Allowances, Quotas, the CEDAW Optional Protocol, the Social Insurance System for Seasonal Workers; and publication and dissemination of new legal regulations.
 - In relation to national policy on women and work, promoting policies, measures and coordinated activities to improve working conditions.

- In relation to intrafamily violence, providing for Prevention and Care Centres for Victims of Family Violence; and promoting coordination of government, private and civil society efforts to prevent intrafamily violence.
- The commitments assumed by the Government under the Millennium Development Goals for 2015 (MDGs), as they relate to promoting gender equality and empowering women, are reflected in the following priorities:
 - Ensuring equitable access for women and men to decision-making positions, in Parliament and in local government.
 - Increasing the labour market participation rate of - especially lower-income - women.
 - Increasing the coverage of pre-school services for the children of working women.
 - Improving the quality indices for female employment.
 - Ensuring equitable access for women and men at all levels of schooling.

Dominica

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

Priority challenges requiring government action:

- Limited financial resources for carrying out research and implementing programmes in various areas for the implementation of the Platform for Action.
- Lack of training, promotion and support programmes for the formulation, design and implementation of gender policies in various areas and for drawing up a National Gender Program in relation to regulatory, institutional and local community activities.
- Lack of a rights perspective in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects. This challenge is central to institutional gender mainstreaming. It is necessary to provide the technical and political tools that can contribute to bridging inequity.
- Lack of specific studies on the status of women in the labour market.
- Existence of discriminatory socio-cultural patterns.

Public agencies have not developed a statistical culture, including the compilation of sex-disaggregated data from a gender perspective to meet the needs of all users. There is a need for statistics indicators revelatory of gender gaps in various public and private sectors.

These factors and limited awareness of gender equity issue among the population inhibit the implementation of the relevant policies and laws that are adopted.

Gender issues still rank low on the public agenda. This lack of understanding of the importance of gender in social and economic development planning affects adversely resource allocation and emphasis in implementing gender -based programmes and plans.

A strategy for drawing up the State budget and local budgets on a gender-sensitive basis in all sectors is essential. Such budgets will enable the Government to attend to the more vulnerable population sections; to direct, coordinate and follow up on its gender-related commitments and the combat against gender-based discrimination; and to incorporate in its policies measures and initiatives that contribute to the full implementation of the Platform for Action.

Ecuador

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

The new Equal Opportunities Plan:

The first (1995-2000) Equal Opportunities Plan (PIO) was based on the eleven critical areas of concern of Beijing as a viable platform for initiating the process of institutionalizing government policies for the protection of women's rights. The PIO currently proposed aims to take a trans-sectoral and integral approach to the problems Ecuadorian women face, which involves influencing the whole set of government policies.

The proposed PIO envisages drawing up an agenda to cover the whole gamut of Ecuadorian women. This entails constructing a political agenda with Ecuadorian women and reflecting those of their demands that were not taken up in the 1995-2000 agenda or in government proposals. Both the Equal Opportunity Plan and the subsequent consolidation of the new Political and Social Gender Pact are envisioned as core components of a broad process of developing government policies designed to achieve equality.

CONAMU has managed to position itself for carrying out its mission and to have an impact on agendas by adopting two strategies: decisions that, when turned into laws and government macro policies on social issues, become mandatory for the various sectors; and through specific projects permeating the different levels of sectoral decision-making. (51)

CONAMU's current leadership favours boosting the various different institutional mechanisms for coordinating gender initiatives in central government and at the local authorities level, such as inter-institutional committees, women's offices, pro-equity networks, and working groups.

Budgets for gender-mainstreaming activities:

There is no policy in Ecuador for allocating resources to the design, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects geared to promoting equal opportunities and the elimination of gender gaps. CONAMU's budget comes under the social sector or, more precisely, the social welfare heading.

A strategy is therefore needed for ensuring a National Budget and local budgets that are sensitive to gender issues and the product of a participatory and consensus-building process reflecting women's concerns and those of the population as a whole. That presupposes transparency at all times with respect to government investment in gender issues - hence the need for indicators.

Gender-based statistics:

Since 1997, government policy formulation has benefited from Ecuador's Integrated Social Indicators System (SIISE), operated by the Social Front Technical Secretariat. This national statistical information system makes it possible to work on the basis of official data, set goals and measure outcomes, especially in the social policy area.

SIISE has a special subset of indicators, known as INMUJERES, illustrating gender gaps in various areas of public and private life. Despite this step in the right direction, specific indicators still need to be constructed to reflect the various dimensions of gender-related inequalities.

To that end, CONAMU must continue pushing for the inclusion of gender indicators in public investment projects, to raise the awareness of - and train - the technical and executive staff inside the institutions responsible for fiscal management, such as the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the congressional Budgets Commission. If such (gender-sensitive) budgets are achieved, they will shape the way in which governments address the practical and strategic needs of women.

Sectoral challenges:

The economy

- Completing and sustaining the Programme of Support for Rural Women in Ecuador (PADEMUR) in the areas in which it is being implemented, by negotiating national budget allocations to execute the programme.
- Formally institutionalizing cooperation between the national body responsible for gender policies and the Ministry of Labour, so that labour policies are designed to guarantee women's right to employment, equitable working conditions, and respect for their rights in the workplace.
- Documenting women's contributions to the national economy.

Poverty

- Coordinating economic and social policy on the basis of a development model geared to social justice and the principles of equality, equity and social and cultural diversity.
- Gender mainstreaming in plans, policies, programmes, and projects, in keeping with the Government's stated development priorities, including revitalizing the economy and eradicating poverty.
- Influencing planning and decision-making in such a way that investment priorities favour the social strata living in poverty and the recently impoverished, focusing particularly on groups of women in situations of risk: poor women in rural and urban areas, women heads of household, migrants, the population on the northern border and ethnic minorities.
- Strengthening and boosting existing mechanisms for dialogue and consensus-building, with the participation of other civil society players of both sexes, with a view to posting these issues on the political agenda and developing and implementing action-oriented strategies and legal reforms, in coordination with entities upholding the institutional status of gender (the congressional Commission on Women's Issues, Youth, Children and the Family).
- Developing an action strategy at various planning and management levels to coordinate policies, programmes and projects capable of modifying institutional structures, conceptions and practices on the basis of an equity perspective allowing access by women and men to financial and non-financial resources on an equal footing.
- Increasing the allocation for the operation of the Promujeres fund as a means of combating poverty.
- Devising indicators to document more objectively the feminization of poverty in Ecuador and thereby achieve a partnership between the institution responsible for gender policies, the technical agency responsible for compiling national statistics and the bodies formulating macro-social policies, in order to integrate gender in government analysis, policies, and programmes.

Health

- Publicizing the rights conferred under the Free Maternity and Child Care Act among the population, especially in rural areas and indigenous communities.

- Promoting legal reforms to ensure a timely flow of resources and to establish punishments for those who charge for services that are free under the law. Accordingly, it is necessary to repeal or amend the Executive Decree issued after the Act was promulgated that arbitrarily allows charging for benefits already determined to be cost-free.
- Reaching national agreement on whether the State should finance sexual and reproductive health care and basic health care for children under five, or whether women should be charged directly for these services.
- Fostering a debate and national agreements on the role of municipalities in the provision of health services.
- Putting forward - through CONAMU's technical team and in coordination with the Ministry of Health - proposals for amendments to the Health Code that would introduce the gender perspective.
- Achieving the signing of an Agreement with the peasant worker social security regime to extend coverage to persons who are not affiliated; and broadening the social base of the Free Maternity Act to include families affiliated to that regime and indigenous women, including traditional midwives.
- Include traditional medicine practitioners for referral of pregnant patients, in childbirth and post-partum work, and health care for children under five, all at low cost, and thereby initiate coordination between formal and informal health care services.
- Establishing resource transfer mechanisms, procedural protocols and other instruments that might enable agreements to be reached with the Izquieta Perez Institute, Health Ministry laboratories and the Red Cross.
- Promoting research into women's health issues and enhancing the quality of data and their timeliness and dissemination. CONAMU is currently negotiating the inclusion of key questions on the situation and status of women in various information-gathering survey questionnaires.
- Supporting and strengthening user committees and other surveillance and monitoring mechanisms to cover health services and the handling of resources by the competent authorities, so as to contribute to the formation of a "healthy citizenry".

Education

- Gender mainstreaming in educational policies.
- Drawing up large-scale, low-cost educational plans and programmes in the short term that incorporate gender, the rights of women and girls, and life-cycle perspectives.
- Drawing up coeducation proposals in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and other institutions specializing in that area and implementing them through pilot projects.
- Establishing operating units for activities addressing gender concerns within the Ministry of Education and endowing them with the necessary human and financial resources, so that they can coordinate government and private initiatives.
- Producing materials on a large-scale, low-cost scale for disseminating ideas that promote equity and the rights of children and adolescents.
- Supporting the organization of girls, youth, women teachers and mothers to defend their rights and to monitor observance of the principle of non-discrimination in education, particularly cases in which women and girls are expelled or rejected because they are pregnant.
- Backing medium and long-term programmes and projects designed to bring about cultural changes.
- Incorporating interculturality as a key element in educational policies.

Violence

- Involving local and provincial governments in the domestic violence issue in order to formulate public policies at those levels.
- Continuing to support the development of pilot projects, in order to detect, *inter alia*, domestic violence, maltreatment, and sexual offences outside the family, timely treatment mechanisms to put an end to the aggressions and intervention to help victims recover, with a view to formulating local and national policies in this area.
- Achieving implementation in the judiciary of the family courts model and other conventional mechanisms for addressing violence.
- Achieving publication of the regulations implementing the Act on Violence against Women and the Family and the Manual of Procedures for standardizing enforcement of the law in the judicial bodies responsible for enforcing it. Achieving also full incorporation of amendments regarding women's rights in the Family Code and the Criminal Code.
- Institutionalizing the Monitoring Unit on the right of women and girls to a life free from violence, in coordination with the various entities responsible for reinforcing the institutional status of gender.
- As regards women in situations of risk: (a) conducting studies with a gender perspective on the impacts of migration on women and their families and encouraging the organization of productive initiatives financed by the foreign exchange generated by migrants; and (b) coordinating strategies to assist women living near the northern border, in the framework of programmes and projects undertaken in that zone.

El Salvador

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

Given the disparities between urban and rural women, it is necessary to press on with the process of rationalizing production in the agriculture in a creative manner and with an eye to gender equity to improve access to economic and social benefits.

Increasing the participation of women, especially those who are heads of households in the production sector. More and better resources should be channelled via international cooperation agencies and national budgets to enhancing the situation of women heads of households by improving their labour skills, helping them to find productive work, educating them in sexual and reproductive health and boosting their self-esteem and feeling of value.

The work begun by the Interdepartmental Legal Commission should be pursued so that, when laws and regulations are proposed or amended, their provisions are free from gender discrimination and disparities.

Added momentum should be given to the inclusion of women's groups in local life with a view to promoting the emergence of leaders, increasing women's participation in local development, improving their skills and raising the number of women elected to public office.

The Labour Code must remain in force and must be fully applied. In particular, there must be compliance with labour laws protecting women.

Guatemala

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

The concern for Guatemala to have a national mechanism at the highest level of the State was expressed by groups of women in various government offices, such as the National Office for Women's Affairs at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, who presented an initiative that would have seen the creation of a National Institute for Women (IMAM). They lobbied the presidential candidates in 1999, but, once elected, the Government was unable to keep its promise and, instead of creating the Institute, the Congress recommended that the President of the Republic set up the Presidential Secretariat for Women, reporting to the executive branch. Accordingly, the Secretariat was created by Legislative Agreement rather than by statute; this is considered a weakness, as it endangers the institutional status of the place women have attained at the highest levels of government. It should be noted, however, that the Presidential Secretariat for Women ranks as a ministry, so that it can play the role of an advisory and coordinating body, present proposals and have an impact on the policies of the State.

In March 2004 the President of the Republic appointed the new Presidential Secretary for Women, keeping civil society women's organizations involved. At present the institution is reviewing its role in the light of government policies for the period 2004-2008.

The Government has said that it is implementing gender equity and expressed support for women.

The following measures are considered as having priority:

- Reducing poverty by creating productive jobs, providing services and a productive social infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, which are those most affected by poverty and are home to the indigenous population.
- Increasing expenditure on education to introduce the gender perspective in the curriculum. It is considered a priority to give effect to the practice of interculturality.
- In the area of decentralization and participation, supporting and strengthening municipalities and promoting Urban and Rural Development Councils promoted, particularly as regards the review of resource allotment procedures, while local development, the decentralization of the System of Financial Administration and service delivery should also receive support.
- Placing emphasis on the social funds' response to the more vulnerable groups.
- Strengthening the public bodies responsible for policies supporting women, supporting the fight against violence and irresponsible fatherhood and observing the commitments made in ratifying international treaties and conventions.

SEPREM enjoys the recognition of, and significant technical and financial support from, the United Nations system and international aid agencies, which have endowed it with a significant degree of budgetary autonomy vis-à-vis the Government and provided ongoing advice. It belongs to the Council of Ministers of the Presidency, and therefore can conclude joint action agreements and demand observance of commitments at the highest level;

Main current goals:

- To promote, with the participation of State institutions, organizations and civil society, the full development of women, supporting public policies and the observance of constitutional

precepts, ordinary laws, peace agreements and the commitments made by the Government in international agreements and conventions on women.

- To strengthen the public institution that orients, directs, coordinates and ensures observance of public policies on women's development.
- To ensure that appropriations for women in the national and local budgets become visible through coordination with the Technical Directorate of the Budget, the Municipal Development Institute, the Comptroller's Office and local government bodies. To strengthen the processes of planning and monitoring the observance of goals and objectives through coordination with the Presidential Secretariat and the Technical Directorate of the Budget.
- To strengthen women's units and advisory boards in State agencies.
- To assess the progress of the National Policy for the Advancement and Development of Guatemalan Women through monitoring and reporting with State bodies with support from the Advisory Board and the Regional Delegates.
- To coordinate the work of the National Women's Platform with delegates of the agencies belonging to the three branches of government and of law enforcement agencies.

Honduras

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

Fulfilment of the commitments undertaken at the Fourth World Conference on Women will require action in the following areas:

- Building over the next five years the capacity of the agencies responsible for implementing measures to secure gender equity and equality.
- Incorporating the gender perspective in the five-year National Plan, 2002-2006 and in other national plans.
- Incorporating the gender perspective in the national budget, starting with 2006. Negotiations must be conducted in the current year with the Ministry of Finance.
- Formulating in the short term a joint strategy shared by the State's various gender institutions.
- Expanding over the next two years the forums for interaction among the State's various gender agencies, the women's movement and private bodies.
- Commissioning by mid-2005 a national information system on women and girls and providing for statistics disaggregated by sex.
- Studying the situation of women migrants and migrant families in order to lay the foundations for measures to furnish them with support in key areas.
- Concluding research agreements in 2005 and 2006 with public and private universities, and using the information on migration currently available in the National Statistics Institute.
- Reducing trafficking in women and children for sex purposes through inter-agency coordination.

Mexico

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

Progress has been made in developing a favourable legal framework, through State commitments on gender equity and combating discrimination against women, that transcend the government of the day. Examples include the law creating the National Institute of Women, the Act on Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination, the General Social Development Act, amendments to the Planning Act and the Federal Act on Promoting Activities Undertaken by Civil Society Organizations. Nonetheless, there is still a need to promote State reform with a gender perspective and to carry out

new measures and initiatives that facilitate full application of the Platform for Action. The following have been identified:

On the fight against poverty and access to employment and economic resources: Labour-market policy and legislation that ensures access, protection and defence of women's labour rights, family and social responsibility for childcare, and incorporation of the main contents of the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) signed by Mexico; policies to support rural women; support for the rights of women migrants in all their dimensions; and use of and access to information technologies.

On education and eradication of stereotypes: Democratization of family structures; construction of a culture of gender equity among the nation's teachers.

On health: Expansion and strengthening of comprehensive health programmes for women.

On violence: Combating violence against women, as a structural issue; providing mechanisms of access to justice, and standardization and adaptation of legislation; monitoring and attention to the case of women murdered in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua.

On political participation and decision-making: Introducing comprehensive electoral reforms with a gender perspective; providing mechanisms for access to decision-making.

On the institutional framework: Aligning national legislation with international commitments; strengthening the relation between the Government and civil society, providing mechanisms of dialogue, consultation and citizen participation; and producing indicators and updating and organizing of existing statistics.

PROEQUIDAD includes short-, medium- and long-term targets for the fulfilment of its strategic objectives, which run from 2002 to 2006 when the current Government is scheduled to leave office:

- Objective: To work for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective as the guiding principle of the plans, programmes, projects and mechanisms of the federal civil service.
- Objective: To work for an efficient legal framework that is consistent with international commitments in the area of human rights for women and girls, so as to further and guarantee the full enjoyment by women and girls of these fundamental rights.
- Objective: To promote equality of opportunities for men and women by promoting affirmative programme measures that include the gender perspective.
- Objective: To promote the implementation of processes and public policies that take into account disparities between men and women that play a part in creating poverty.
- Objective: To promote, in all areas of society, an education for life that creates appreciation for diversity, tolerance and respect for gender differences of individuals, and to guarantee, at all levels, types and structures of education, that girls and women receive special attention, so as to expand their participation in all fields of human endeavour, with a sense of justice and free from prejudice and discrimination.
- Objective: To eliminate the inequalities that prevent women from attaining full health. Develop lines of research in health in which the gender perspective is permanently present. Develop reliable health indicators from a gender perspective.
- Objective: To prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women. Present the outline of a national programme for a life free of violence in the family, establishing an institutional board to coordinate the corresponding prevention activities and services (November 2001). Develop a

national programme against violence against women a national system of indicators with a gender perspective on violence in Mexico (December 2004).

- Objective: To ensure that women have access to and participate fully, on an equal footing with men, in the structures of power and decision making. Achieve a balance of 35 to 65 percent between men and women at decision-making levels in the three branches of government, as recommended internationally.
- Objective: To promote an objective image of women, recognizing differences among people and free from stereotypes in the cultural area, sports and the media. Consolidate women's participation and initiatives in cultural development, the arts and sport by 2006.

Nicaragua

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

Poverty remains one of the main obstacles to development in Nicaragua, and therefore holds back the advancement of women.

Coordination difficulties persist (both inter- and intra-institutional) compounded by a lack of monitoring and follow-up of the enforcement of laws and regulations.

These problems need to be addressed through training and awareness-raising activities at all levels in order to raise awareness with a view to carrying out activities and programmes favourable to women and formulating a National Gender Programme.

Paraguay

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

The Secretariat for Women of the Office of the President of the Republic (SMPR) has succeeded in introducing gender issues in the public agenda, but it is still necessary to insist on the need for gender mainstreaming in all government agencies. A law institutionalising the gender perspective is necessary.

Main impediments to an optimal implementation of the National Plan for Equality as an efficient tool for resolving gender disparities:

- Lack of a budget - a fundamental obstacle that undermines the effectiveness of public institutions in preparing, implementing and evaluating their projects.
- Lack of a comprehensive vision encompassing public policies, the fact that gender issues concern vulnerable groups and the particular requirements for addressing those issues from a system perspective.
- Lack of a system in the Paraguayan State for evaluating policies and of any effective accountability mechanisms: consequently it is impossible to directly gauge the impact of existing gender initiatives on women and men.
- Persisting discrimination against women in various areas.
- Some subjects of concern:

- a high maternal mortality rate
- acts of violence against women
- low levels of political participation
- high rate of female unemployment

The above problems are those that need to be addressed with the greatest urgency.

Puerto Rico

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

- The change of Administration every four years is one of the obstacles that postpone or hold back any work undertaken.
- The sexist attitudes of the personnel responsible for the application of government policies is one of the challenges regularly faced.
- Financial resources often do not cover the requirements for implementing the programmes called for in application of the government policies in the various areas.

Dominican Republic

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

The State Secretariat for Women will in the coming months of 2004 conduct a review of the National Gender Equity Plan (PLANEG), a working instrument that embodies many of the commitments made by the Dominican Government under the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and which will set out guidelines for the full implementation of the Platform in the future.

However, reference may be made to a few of the areas where the State Secretariat for Women is developing initiatives: With a view to consolidating the violence-against-women area and enhancing the efficiency of the implementation and fulfilment of Act No. 24-97 on Intrafamily Violence, the State Secretariat for Women has taken various steps, including development of a National Model for Care and Prevention in the Field of Domestic Violence and the 2002 National Standards for dealing with violence in the health sector. The standards were developed in cooperation with the State Secretariat of Public Health and Social Welfare (SESPAS) with the support of the Commission for the Reform of the Health Sector, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

It is planned to establish an organizational structure that facilitates linkage and interrelation between the Model's various implementation levels, and to monitor its implementation. Three activity levels have been identified: national/regulatory, institutional and local/community

SEM is setting up new Gender Equity and Development Offices and strengthening those that already exist.

The State Secretariat for Women has formulated a proposal for a Criminal Code reform, which was submitted to the Chamber of Deputies in April. The proposed amendments to the Criminal Code are to be developed with a view to ensuring consistency between the Dominican Republic's criminal law and the international regulatory instruments that it has ratified.

Main difficulties:

- Limited access to resources at the national and international level in view of the magnitude of the endeavour.
- Lack of progress in enhancing inter-agency coordination as specified in the Model, so that it is difficult to enforce the law and the Belem do Para Convention.

Suriname

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

The following main institutional challenges and difficulties are identified:

- Strengthening the institutionalization of the national policy for gender equality and equity as part of a regulatory, programmatic and budgetary framework.
- Manifesting greater political will in implementing specific activities. There is a need for instruments and techniques to promote legislative reform and encourage reform in the institutional mechanisms that ensure and back the equitable participation of women in decision making.
- Providing training and greater dissemination to achieve a change in the mentalities that justify discrimination.
- Incorporating specific gender requirements in the relevant analyses, assessments, research and statistics.
- Intensifying the coordination of the activities of the various ministries so as to arrive at a legislative agenda and an institutional framework for public policies conducive to recognizing women's rights.

Uruguay

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

Uruguay does not yet have a national action plan for fulfilling the Beijing commitments. Despite this lack, progress has been made in achieving some of the Beijing goals.

Closer ties have been forged between the Government and civil society, and between the different branches of government, for introducing the gender perspective into public policies. In this respect, the creation of a Gender Equity Commission in the House of Representatives, embracing members of all political persuasions, is helping to achieve the objectives established in the Platform.

In legal terms, mention must be made of the existence since 1997 of a tripartite commission on equal employment opportunities, the creation of mechanisms to prevent family violence and the recent adoption of special legislation on procedures for handling cases of domestic violence, with the consequent adjustment of judicial proceedings to the challenges inherent in the implementation of the new law.

Significant progress has been made in raising the profile of some of the key themes of the Beijing platform. There have been recent debates in Parliament on legislative initiatives such as assisted childbirth, domestic violence, gender parity in electoral lists and sexual and reproductive health.

The process of harmonizing national statistics for gender information purposes is still encountering difficulties in some sectors of the national statistics system. Nevertheless, mention can be made of efforts to standardize methodologies, procedures and classifications, which have produced advances in the system, although much remains to be done before an integrated system of gender indicators is available.

Finally, it must be noted that the monitoring of gender policies has been left almost exclusively to civil society organizations (CSOs). The measures taken by various government bodies do not amount to a State policy that would transcend the action of specific governments, since those activities depend on the initiative and inclination of individual officials and the support of international agencies, rather than on a sustained political will.

Venezuela

Main challenges and measures taken to address them

The main constraints on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) include the fact that access to justice for women in situations of human rights violation is not sufficiently understood by judicial bodies, especially in cases of intrafamily violence.

Some of the other constraints worth mentioning are:

- Lack of gender training among many officials of both sexes (the case of the legal system).
- Difficulties in collaboration and coordination between certain public bodies.
- Ignorance among women of the legal framework available to protect them.
- Non-existence, in many cases, of social indicators with a gender breakdown that would make it possible to deepen gender analysis of the status of women.

To overcome these shortcomings, the State of Venezuela has been promoting a series of measures. They include preparation of the National Plan on Equality for Women, which takes account of the international commitments to which Venezuela is signatory and reflects the government programme set out in the National Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Nation, 2002-2007.

Footnotes

- (1) Follow-up Report on the Beijing Platform for Action, submitted by the Government of Chile to the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), May 1999.
- (2) For more information on these programmes and initiatives, see the Beijing Follow-up Report, presented by the Government in 1999.
- (3) This second plan identifies six broad, horizontal issues for attention, with their respective objectives, and guidelines for concrete activities to be pursued during the decade. Those issues are the following: guaranteeing a culture of equality of opportunities between men and women; promoting women's rights and their full enjoyment; women's participation in power structures and in the decision-making process; economic independence for women and seducing poverty; improving the day-today well-being and quality of life for women; and introducing the gender focus in public polices.
- (4) On 24 March 2000, Presidential Instruction 15 created the Council of Ministers on Equal Opportunities. The Council consists of: the Minister Secretary-General of the Presidency, the Minister of the Economy, Development and Reconstruction, the Minister of Planning and Cooperation, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance and the Minister responsible for SERNAM.
- (5) Act No. 19.611, published in the Official Journal of 16 June 1999.
- (6) Rocio Rosero Garces and Ariadna Reyes Ávila, Strategic Programme for Gender Mainstreaming and Comprehensive Protection of Women's Human Rights. Prepared by for UNIFEM. Quito, August 2003.
- (7) Rosero Garcés, Rocío, Ariadna Reyes Avila and Maria Pilar Vela, From Demands to Rights. Women and the 1998 Constitution]. Quito, June 2000, p. 37.
- (8) CONAMU/UNIFEM, Cecilia Valdiviesna Vega, Ariadna Reyes Ávila and Rocío Rosero Garcés, Systematization of CONAMU good practices in drawing up government policies on gender issues. Quito, August 2003, p. 26.
- (9) Penal Code, article 163, rape of a person aged between 14 and 18, 4-10 year imprisonment.
- (10) Penal Code, article 165, 3-5 year imprisonment.
- (11) Penal Code, article 170-A, 4-8 year imprisonment.
- (12) 2002-2006 Government Plan, p. 1.
- (13) 2002-2006 Government Plan, p. 12.
- (14) Executive Decree No. 15-2002, 7 November 2002.
- (15) VAGGF, Bolivia Five Years after Beijing. Power, Opportunities and Self-determination for Women in the New Century. 2000 Report.
- (16) Data from the Survey of Socio-economic Trends (CASEN) for those years.
- (17) This network operates through a National Steering Council (chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and consisting of the Minister of SERNAM and undersecretaries, departmental directors and overseers of the regions involved), a National Executive, a National Technical Committee, and equivalent officials at the regional and commune level.
- (18) Of the total indigenous population, 52.2 percent are women and 47.8 percent are men.
- (19) Census 1992-2002.
- (20) Association of Fruit Producers (FEDEFruta), Association of Fruit Exporters (ASOEX) and the National Agriculture Society (SNA).
- (21) The Occupational Health Commission has promoted a special programme for female seasonal workers, covering five aspects: supervision of occupational health conditions,

- supervision of pesticide use, health examinations, information on health rights and training.
- (22) Decree No. 1907, published on 3 March 1999.
 - (23) Act No. 19.670.
 - (24) Its Regulations, contained in Supreme Decree No. 102, were published in the Official Journal of 16 May 2002.
 - (25) Act No. 19.779, promulgated on 4 December 2001.
 - (26) CASEN data for the respective years.
 - (27) Constitutional Reform promulgated on 7 May 2003.
 - (28) These are: (1) Framework Curriculum for General Basic Education, Decree 240); (2) Framework Curriculum for Intermediate Education. Decree 220; (3) Basic Curriculum for Pre-school Education. One of the general objectives for Preschool Education is "to provide quality instruction to girls and boys that will be relevant and will consider ethnic, linguistic and gender diversities, and special education needs, together with other significant cultural aspects of pupils, their families and communities". (4) The gender focus is included in all study programmes from years 5 to 8 of basic education and the first to fourth secondary school grades. SERNAM participated in the MINEDUC Professional Development Programme that was conducted for teachers on implementing the new gender-focused courses of study in basic and secondary education.
 - (29) This bill was again submitted in early 2003 by a larger number of male and female parliamentarians from all political parties, and is now undergoing first hearing in the Family Committee of the Chamber of Deputies. The purpose of this initiative is to secure a more equitable representation of women and men in the National Congress and in local government bodies.
 - (30) For more information on these laws, see the Fourth Periodic Report of the Government of Chile on the Measures Adopted to Implement the Provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, January 2004.
 - (31) Bill presented by the government on 30 August 2001. Status: under consideration in the Chamber of Deputies. The Family Committee is preparing an initial report.
 - (32) The intention is to improve procedures and establish adequate penalties for the types of conduct to be punished. Among other things, it broadens the concept of family violence, establishes greater powers to request and grant protective measures, restricts the possibility of inter-party agreements, gives the police greater powers to act in emergency cases, and regulates the system of penalties.
 - (33) OAS, Belem do Para, Brazil. This Convention was published in the Official Gazette of Chile in 1998, and is thus in full effect in Chile.
 - (34) Act No. 19.617, published in the Official Journal of 12 July 1999.
 - (35) SERNAM: "Detection and Analysis of the Prevalence of Family Violence", Santiago, 2001. The study used the basic protocol of the WHO.
 - (36) Consisting of agencies such as: CAVAS (Care Centre for Victims of Sexual Assault), the Sexual Crimes Brigade of the Judicial Police, the National Service for Minors and the Forensic Medicine Services of the Ministry of Justice.
 - (37) The Commission was formed in February 2001 and comprises the Ministers of Labour and Human Resources, Social Welfare and Public Works, Manufacturing, Foreign Trade, Fisheries and Competitiveness, Urban Development and Housing, Tourism and Environment.
 - (38) Idem. p. 5 [sic].
 - (39) Preparation of women for work and support for women workers and businesswomen and the participation of indigenous and black women, as well as for information centre on women's rights and on prevention of violence against women and care for its victims.

- (40) Survey on Social Security in Honduras. A Study on Minimum Legal Wages. Poverty in Honduras.
- (41) Jorge Irías, Rosibel Garay and others. General Survey on Child Labour in Honduras. National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labour. IPEC, ILO, UNICEF and Save Children Britannic.
- (42) A body set up in 1999 by a Special Act as a forum to discuss and suggest solutions to the country's problems and formulate a national project, which will include gender equity and equality as the focus for educational and social development.
- (43) *El Heraldo* and the National Autonomous University (UNAH) established reading comprehension centres. *El Heraldo*, 24 April 2004, pp. 2 and 3.
- (44) See the summary in the annexes.
- (45) The Gender Perspective in the Modernization of Police Institutions and in Law and Order. Prevention Policy of Honduras, 2003.
- (46) Espinoza Isolda, Gender Profile of the Nicaraguan Economy.
- (47) ILO, Gender and the Labour Market.
- (48) "Chilean Women: Statistics for the New Century", National Office of Women's Affairs, SERNAM, and National Statistics Institute, INE. 2001.
"Chilean Women. Trends of the Last Decade", Census 1992-2002, National Office of Women's Affairs, SERNAM, and National Statistics Institute, INE. March 2004.
- (49) Taken from CONAMU's institutional presentation. Rocío Rosero G. (Sociologist), Executive Director, October 2003.
- (50) Mariela Arce and Nard Meléndez. Review of the institutional framework on gender issues. Presidential Commission on Modernization of the State, April 2002.
- i. Document containing responses to the issues raised by the CEDAW Committee of Experts for consideration of the Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico (2002).
- ii. Ibid.
- iii. Country paper prepared for the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly "Women in 2000: gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century" and the Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico on the implementation of the Convention.
- iv. See the response to issue 14 raised by the CEDAW Committee of Experts considering the Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico (2002).
- v. Published on 20 January 2004 in the Official Journal.
- vi. Published on 11 June 2004 in the Official Journal.
- vii. Published on 21 January 2004 in the Official Journal.
- viii. See paragraph 806 of the Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico on the implementation of the Convention, and its responses to issues 3 and 18 raised by the CEDAW Committee of Experts considering the Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico (2002).
- ix. Published on 21 May 2003 in the Official Journal.
- x. Created by Presidential Decree on 18 February 2003.
- xi. Created by Presidential Decree on 13 August 2003.
- xii. Published on 31 December 2003 in the Official Journal.
- xiii. See the response to issue 26 raised by the CEDAW Committee of Experts considering the Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico (2002).
- xiv. Ibid.
- xv. See the response to issue 7 raised by the CEDAW Committee of Experts considering the Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico (2002).
- xvi. Ibid.
- xvii. Ibid.

- xviii. See the response to issue 14 raised by the CEDAW Committee of Experts considering the Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico (2002).
- xix. See the response to issue 23 raised by the CEDAW Committee of Experts considering the Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico (2002).
- xx. For more detailed information on INMUJERES, see the document containing Mexico's replies to the issues raised by the CEDAW CEDAW Committee of Experts considering the Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico (2002).
- xxi. Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico on the implementation of the Convention (2002).
- xxii. Document containing Mexico's replies to the issues raised by the CEDAW CEDAW Committee of Experts considering the Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico (2002).
- xxiii. See the response to issue 26 raised by the CEDAW Committee of Experts considering the Fifth Periodic Report of Mexico (2002).