



Regional Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean prior to the 57th Session of the Commission of Status of Women (CSW)

Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women

Concept Note

Introduction

The 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations will be held in New York from the 4th to the 15th March 2013. This year, the priority theme of the session will be "The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls". Considering the magnitude of this problem and the impact it has on the lives of millions of women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is essential that this session ends with a clear message that reflects a recognition of the need for measurable commitments in terms of prevention, care, access to justice and ending impunity.

UN Women is convening a series of regional consultations in order to exchange views and information, strengthen coordination and align positions prior to CSW this year. In this regard, the Government of El Salvador, together with UN Women, are organizing a regional consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean in order to drive forward political and strategic commitments to guarantee the right of women to a life free of violence, which have been expressed in different resolutions, and are reiterated and reflected in agreed conclusions; to promote agreements that will lead to action; and, above all, to reach a consensus in terms of regional priorities to be taken into account in the considerations and results of the 57th session of CSW.

As part of this consultation, it is also considered important to generate a space for participating countries to share their experiences, good practices, lessons learned and critical issues related to the progress and challenges faced in preventing and eliminating violence against women. This includes making visible strategic issues such as, amongst others, accountability, data and information systems, which need to be addressed. These spaces of interchange will serve as preparation for the discussions of the CSW as well as setting the tone for working synergies between countries, including in South - South and Triangular Cooperation frameworks.

Background in Latin America and the Caribbean

Violence against women, in different forms and expressions, is a persistent problem in the Latin America and Caribbean region, which undermines the rights of women and prevents the full development of their capabilities and opportunities as well as limiting their full economic and political autonomy and freedom.

Given this reality, the countries of the region have made significant progress at the level of public policy and legal instruments and their implementation, the establishment of comprehensive services, campaigns to visibilise the issue, and in accountability mechanisms, among others. However, the persistence of violence has shown that, to date, these measures have not been enough. Therefore, it is essential to generate forces and joint positions at the regional level in order to contribute to the achievement of international commitments and to strengthen the position of countries to advance the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls and to provide a comprehensive, effective and timely response for women who face violence.

In this process, the role of national women's mechanisms is essential and their strategic role needs to be promoted and made visible. Moreover, the creation of spaces for debate, consensus and coordination at the regional level is important to ensure that the needs of women throughout their life cycle are met and that related commitments are made.

Objectives

The regional consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean seeks to bring together the highest authorities of national women's mechanisms in the region, with the following objectives:

- Identify the critical issues of interest to the region requiring particular attention to drive forward and that are considered as priority for inclusion in the considerations and results of the 57th session of CSW;
- Adopt a Declaration containing recommendations, priorities and key messages of the Latin America and the Caribbean to be presented at the 57th session of CSW;
- Establish and strengthen partnerships and coordination to facilitate the adoption and monitoring of the agreements reached in the consultation and in the 57th session of the CSW;
- Foster a dialogue with regards to knowledge, good practices at national and regional levels, and the positioning of the region on strategies to end violence against women and girls and

to allow effective monitoring of the agreements of the consultation and of the 57th Session of the CSW.

Issues of Interest

Given the many expressions and forms of violence against women, it is of utmost priority to ensure comprehensive efforts to eradicate this problem in all processes of prevention, care, protection, and reparation addressing of the rights of women who face violence. Therefore, for the Regional Consultation, it is proposed to address the following issues specifically, as well as to transversally address the different forms of violence faced by women across these issues:

1. *Legal frameworks, policies and good practices to prevent violence against women and girls*
2. *Systems of care for women who face violence*
3. *Access to justice within a human rights framework*

In addition to the issues identified above, in the exchange of experiences, it is also intended to address the issue of information and accountability systems to facilitate effective monitoring of agreements at national levels.

Final Product

We propose the adoption of a Declaration at regional level (Latin America and the Caribbean), as an instrument to highlight the commitment of countries to preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women, including priorities, best practices and persistent challenges, that should be reflected in the discussions of the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and to promote a regional position that will facilitate the adoption of agreements in that session.

Participants

Organizer: The Government of El Salvador, through the Salvadorian Institute for the Advancement of Women

Cosponsor: UN Women, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

Special Guests:

Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women

Moni Pizani, Regional Director, UN Women, Latin America and the Caribbean

Marcela Suazo, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Sonia Montaña, Director of the Division of Gender Affairs, ECLAC



International Participants: Ministers, and/or senior Government officials, responsible for public policy in favor of the rights and empowerment of women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition to these international participants, a limited number of senior officials of the following institutions in El Salvador will be invited, as observers and / or expert speakers, to the discussion sessions on the second day that will focus on the exchange of experiences and knowledge:

- District Attorney's Office
- Supreme Court of Justice
- National Civil Police
- Specialized Technical Committee
- Women's Parliamentary Group
- Supreme Court Judges

Logistics

For the development of the regional consultation process, the following logistical details apply:

Dates: February 11th – 12th, 2013

Venue: El Salvador. On the first day, the event will take place at Hotel Sheraton Presidente; San Salvador. The activities of the second day will take place at Ciudad Mujer, Santa Ana.

The costs will be shared by the Government of El Salvador and UN Women.