



# UN Women Americas and the Caribbean Results Achieved in 2014



## **Acknowledgements**

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*UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.*

*UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality*

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# INTRODUCTION

In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) a strong women's movement and high level government commitments have contributed to favorable legislative frameworks for gender equality. Engagement in the region around global intergovernmental processes, such as the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+20) and the negotiation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda, has led to strong regional calls for a standalone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The political and social climate has generally been favorable with significant dialogue, advocacy and coordination seen between States, civil society and the United Nations System.

However, widespread gaps in implementation impede the impact of legislation for gender equality and insufficient national monitoring and evaluation frameworks are a barrier to ensuring accountability. Despite recent advances in terms of economic growth, social investment, and stable democratic systems, the region continues to grapple with extremely high levels of income inequality, crime and violence. Cultural attitudes and norms related to traditional gender roles and stereotypes continue to present challenges to the achievement of women's rights and significant gender inequalities are compounded by other forms of inequality based upon race, ethnicity, geographic location, income, age, disability, HIV status and sexual orientation.

UN Women has established a Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean based in Panama, along with nine Country offices,<sup>1</sup> one multi-country office for the Caribbean sub-region based in Barbados, and the UN Women Global Training Centre in the Dominican Republic. UN Women also maintains a programme presence in a number of other countries with cost sharing initiatives. In 2014, the overall budget for UN Women in the region was approximately US\$ 28.7 million, with almost US\$ 9.8 million in cost-sharing funds, including Trust Funds.

The Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment of UN

<sup>1</sup> Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic (also UN Women Training Centre), Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay

Women has determined that *"the organization is pursuing results that are relevant to its mandate and pertinent at global and national levels. The rationale for the creation of UN Women – the need for leadership on gender equality at a global level- remains valid."*

In the LAC region, UN Women has advanced women's rights through a virtuous cycle of ensuring that transformative normative agreements and commitments that address the structural impediments to the fulfilment of women's rights are agreed and operational work at country levels helps implement these commitments. In particular, significant results have been achieved in the priority areas of work in the region: **political participation and leadership, economic empowerment, and ending violence against women and girls. Issues related to women, peace and security** have also been a priority in relevant countries. As key to improving accountability for follow through on commitments to gender equality, UN Women has engaged in crosscutting work to promote **civil society leadership and strengthen gender statistics and gender sensitive planning**. It has also led efforts to coordinate and ensure coherence in the responses of the UN system to the needs of women and girls at regional and country levels.

This report aims to highlight some of the key results from 2014 and provide a snapshot of UN Women's contributions towards achieving full equality and human rights for all women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean.

# Noteworthy Achievements 2014



2 At the Special Session on Beijing+20 in Latin America and the Caribbean



# 1 IMPROVING GOALS AND STANDARDS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

UN Women has a powerful mandate that combines normative and operational functions. On the one hand, UN Women supports inter-governmental bodies at global and regional levels in the formulation of policies, norms and standards.

Photo: UN Women/Mario Ruiz

From left to right, Claudia Pascual Grau, Minister of Women's Affairs of Chile; Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women; and Luiza Carvalho, Regional Director of UN Women for the Americas and the Caribbean, addressing the civil society during the high-level event on "Women in power and decision-making: Building a different world," in Santiago, Chile on February 2015.

On the other, UN Women supports Member States to implement these standards, by providing technical and financial support and forging effective partnerships. UN Women advocates for a transformative stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment as part of the new development agenda (proposed SDG 5) as well as robust mainstreaming of gender considerations across all parts of the new development framework. This position has been widely echoed by governmental delegates and civil society representatives at major global and regional inter-governmental processes, including *inter alia* the 58th and 59th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the XII Regional Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean and the regional Special Session on Beijing+20.

UN Women's continued support for capacity development, advocacy and alliance building with States (including national women's machineries), women's organizations and key UN agencies has been pivotal in conveying the voices of women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean in preparation for global inter-governmental processes, including Beijing+20 and the negotiation of the SDGs.

The first quarter of 2014 was marked by the Regional Consultation with National Women's Machineries in preparation for CSW 58, which took place in **Mexico** in March 2014 with the priority theme of assessing key progress and challenges for women and girls in

implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The consultation was convened by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Women's Institute of Mexico (INMUJERES) with support from UN Women. As a result of the consultation, the Mexico Declaration was unanimously adopted by States expressly acknowledging *inter alia* the need for a transformative and comprehensive goal with clear targets and indicators to ensure gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment in the Post 2015 development framework.

The proceedings were also influenced by the civil society regional assessment on progress and challenges in the implementation of the MDGs. The assessment identified specific recommendations from the LAC region and eight out of ten were included in the CSW 58 agreed conclusions adopted by Member States at the global session.

UN Women supported a civil society assessment on progress and challenges in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to inform the LAC Special Session on Beijing+ 20. The Special Session took place in Santiago de Chile in November, within the framework of the 51st Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean. The session was jointly convened and organized by UN Women's Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

### Special Session on Beijing+ 20 in Latin America and the Caribbean

Twenty One countries unanimously reaffirmed the region's commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action, and the goal to remove barriers that prevent women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life. In the Outcome Statement, the region's governments called for a specific target on gender equality in the post 2015 development agenda as well as mainstreaming of gender and human rights in all the objectives, targets and indicators.

During the Special Session, Ministers and representatives from civil society and national women's organizations recognized the progress made towards implementing the platform for action in the past 20 years as well as the remaining gaps. They emphasized that the human rights of women and girls are essential to eradicate poverty and attain higher standards of equality, peace and security. They also recognized the post 2015 development agenda as a strategic opportunity to address gender equality and empower women and reaffirmed the importance of gender statistics and indicators for tracking and monitoring progress. The Outcome Statement underscores the importance of adequate resources to develop and implement gender equality policies for post 2015 and calls for ECLAC, UN Women and the region's governments to establish a technical working group to address gender-sensitive budgeting and financing.

During 2014, UN Women supported preparations for the high-level global event on “Women in power and decision-making: Building a different world,” which was held in **Santiago de Chile** in February 2015. More than 300 global women leaders gathered to take part in the conference with the aim of galvanizing political support to achieve gender equality and honor commitments made by 189 governments to uphold the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The event was inaugurated by the President of Chile –and founding Executive Director of UN Women– Michelle Bachelet, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and resulted in a strong call to governments and the private sector to take stronger measures to close

the gap of inequalities in order to achieve the goals established 20 years ago in Beijing.<sup>3</sup>

Consistent data and statistics on gender equality are essential to the development and implementation of the SDGs. In November, **Mexico** celebrated fifteen years of regional progress and leadership on gender statistics with the 15th International Meeting on Gender Statistics. This meeting was organized by INEGI<sup>4</sup> and INMUJERES of Mexico, ECLAC and UN Women in the framework of the Working Group on Gender Statistics of the ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas. Through this meeting, UN Women supports the generation of methodological and technical tools and fosters south-south cooperation for improved gender statistics.

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