



**Economic and Social Commission for Latin America
and the Caribbean**

**The fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women
Beijing+20 (2015)**

**Panel Results of regional Beijing+20 events of the United Nations
regional commissions**

Thursday, 12 March 2015, 3.00 – 6.00 p.m.

Trusteeship Council

Delivered by Mr. Antonio Prado, ECLAC Deputy Executive Secretary,

I am very excited to join this panel today with my colleagues from all Regional Commissions. ECLAC has been promoting an agenda for equality and putting gender equality at the center of our work.

We have taken Beijing+20 as an opportunity to analyze where we are today and how we can advance faster towards gender equality as a shared horizon. In this process ECLAC in collaboration with UN Women organized a special session of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean to review and debate

about the situation of women, 20 years after Beijing. This session had active participation from 26 countries of the region, UN agencies and civil society.

LAC is diverse and unequal region and this inequality is also build on gender inequality. Overall in Latin America gross domestic product has increased and the percentage of population living in poverty has decreased significantly, yet at the exact same time the feminization of poverty has increased (from 109 in 1994 to almost 117 in 2013)

Women's diversity across the life cycle, rural and urban women, indigenous, among many groups requires specific attention because their need and problems are different.

Our focus is women's autonomy: including political, physical and economic autonomy. Real impact can only be achieved if an integral approach is not taken. Political participation, sexual and reproductive health and rights, paid and unpaid work issues are all interlinked. There are important legal and institutional developments but it is worrying that many problems show no decrease: violence against women and teenage maternity, specially concentrated in poorest young women, are clear examples.

Women's economic autonomy is a key challenge and the picture is complex: women are more educated than men, but one in two women are outside the labor market, and there, 8 out of 10 women work in low productivity sectors. Women's segregation in education and the labour market is particularly harmful considering that those sectors are specially vulnerable in times of crisis and will be affected with new advances in technology. Science and technology careers where women are a minority appear as neutral spaces, but reproduce patriarchal structure with the "gatekeepers" and demanding full time dedication to the reproductive period, "rush hour", which harms women. In LAC, women have similar access to ICTs than men, but there is the "second digital divide" in advanced technology applications, which require time to develop the necessary skills to use.

One of the main obstacles to women's access to quality work is the burden of unpaid work, which generates time poverty: Women work longer hours than men in all countries with surveys and much of this time is spent on unpaid work. The region has some interesting experiences of

countries which are developing systems for public care services, which can have a profound effect on the redistribution of domestic work and care.

In the face of these challenges in the region ECLAC has proposed a new approach that redefines the traditional equation between the state, market and society in order to put equality at the heart of the development paradigm. This implies a break with the economic paradigm that has prevailed in the region for at least three decades; it requires a structural change aimed at closing social gaps and reforming productive structures.

The discussion of an equality agenda in the region, the global debate on the concept of sustainable development, social, economic and environmental pillars, and future ODS, presents a great opportunity to consider active and meaningful participation of women both in the definition of this agenda and its implementation, to achieve that men and women benefit from development. It is an opportunity to address poverty and inequality, understanding that gender equality must be at the heart of this agenda. The importance of a gender perspective across the agenda: objectives, targets and goals, means of implementation, accountability mechanism and financing, cannot be overlooked. We cannot afford to lose this opportunity to change the lives of women and girls across the world.

We expect that the monitoring and accountability of a future development agenda serves to strengthen the capacities of governments, as well as intergovernmental meeting spaces and cooperation. In this regard, LAC countries have highlighted the role of the subsidiary bodies of ECLAC (intergovernmental spaces) in this process, as well as the importance of coordination of the various sectoral agendas.

(How to take this agenda forward: Strategies, tools, opportunities for the implementation of commitments)

First, I would like to mention institutions, in particular the mechanisms for the advancement of women and also the role of ECLAC: In ALC there is progress in the development of a regional architecture and a regional agenda of gender equality, built on the basis of the Regional Conferences on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean organized by ECLAC, in Quito (2007), Brasilia (2010) and Santo Domingo (2013) and their consensus. All countries have ministries or institutes of women, who are key allies and great forces behind advancement. We

work closely together with them providing technical cooperation and promoting exchange of experiences, based on a shared agenda. Most countries have made progress in gender mainstreaming, including development plans (ex Mexico.) and decentralization, planning and budgeting processes. There are also efforts to measure public investment in gender policies. In ALC, we have the historical contribution of the women's movement, feminist and civil society, key partners for gender equality.

ECLAC's promotion of an equality agenda requires us to face the challenge of articulation of social and economic policies: Economic empowerment of women and poverty eradication are not achieved only from the social. It is important to work across sectors and strengthen the development of economic policies that promotes women's economic autonomy. The focus must move "from the micro to the macro", that is move from microcredit, microenterprise, to a wider focus aiming at reviewing economic policies. There are strategic areas to target such which could have a great impact such as industrial policies, mining, digital agendas, innovation and technology.

We have data, and have succeeded in breaking the statistical silence, but we need more: Gender statistics and indicators have been developed, thanks to the work of the Institutes of Statistics. At ECLAC, the Gender Equality Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean generates information to support policy processes. This is a key to strengthen the arguments for equality, what is not counted does not count. Data shows we are right: A clear example is the exercise to make differences disappear in activity rates of men and women, or income gaps between men and women produce clear declines in levels of poverty and inequality.

Gender equality should be a priority in the post 2015 development agenda, and we should pay attention to aspects such as financing for development, which cannot be overlooked.