

# Costa Rica



**MISIÓN PERMANENTE ANTE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS / PERMANENT  
MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**CSW MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FORUM**

**JANUARY 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

**PANEL SESSION 4 – PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS  
AND GENDER EQUALITY ADVOCATES IN THE MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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I would like to thank UN Women for having organized this event in preparation of the 60<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women. It is of utmost importance that we focus all our efforts towards the monitoring and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and this cannot be achieved without a comprehensive and integral approach across sectors and areas of government.

Thank you as well to Mrs. Lopa Banerjee, Chief of the Civil Society Section on UN Women for having introduced so comprehensively our topic of discussion.

Costa Rica has accomplished important achievements on several objectives outlined in goal five of the Sustainable Development Agenda. We have experienced significant progress in the implementation of our National Policy for Gender Equality, which gathers the State’s commitments acquired over the past decade. The implementation is to be concluded next year. It aimed to significantly reduce or eliminate, within possibilities, gender gaps in all areas of our society. It covers six strategic objectives related to employment and income, child and elderly care as a social responsibility, education, health, the effective protection of rights and the fight against violence, the participation of women in the political life and the strengthening of the institutionality in favor of gender equality.

This national policy has been a collective process that has facilitated the coordination among governmental institutions and the National Mechanism for the Advancement of Women, as well as women organizations. It therefore counts, since its inception, with the support of the organizations working on gender issues, civil society representing different sectors and with the collaboration and political will of the four government branches.

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In terms of the institutional consolidation of gender equality, we have redoubled our efforts in order to incorporate a gender perspective in all governmental spheres. The role of the Ministry for Women's Condition, has been consolidated during this process, women's participation in all forms has been promoted and guaranteed: with representation on its Executive Board, in the Women's Forum, as well as in the formulation process and the promotion of the national policy for gender equality. The Women's Forum is formed by social organizations that work in favor of women and it has become a valuable mechanism of exchange, dialogue and consultation with the civil society.

Likewise, the Ministry of Women's Condition has fostered the establishment of dialogues and spaces for women advocacy mechanisms to interact and contribute. This has been especially relevant at the regional and local levels, where a variety of activities are being organized so that input from all sectors of society is received; such is the case of Local Agendas and Negotiation Roundtables. This has promoted the active participation of women and their organizations in the formulation of local policies, including local plans for equality.

As a result of the implementation of the national policy for gender equality during the past ten years, major advancements in the goals related to the political and institutional participation in favor of gender equality have been achieved. The country has experienced a transformational process in terms of the creation of rules and regulations that foster the participation of women at different levels of decision-making and in relation to the definition of measures directed towards the promotion of their full participation in equal conditions in all spheres of public life.

In order to guarantee gender parity in political participation, we recognized the need not to only ensure that the established minimum quotas are vertically applied, but that women can be found heading the nomination lists. As a result, in October last year, the Constitutional Court ruled for the implementation of horizontal parity, which means that the electoral lists for next elections to be held in 2018, need to be head by men and women in an interpolated way.

We support the idea that having voice and participation in the political processes and decisions that determine the lives of women and girls is a fundamental dimension of their human rights and critical to create more just and democratic societies. The political culture change that allows women to be fully integrated in the decision making processes needs thus to be consolidated.

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In order to accomplish this, the Ministry has carried out a series of actions toward the cultural change in favor of gender equality. Media campaigns have been developed in order to sensitize the population on gender-related issues in order to fight gender related stereotypes. Moreover, permanent processes of capacity building and sensitization in gender issues and human rights have been developed and imparted to the staff in governmental institutions in an effort to reduce the discrimination against women in all its forms.

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the government has initiated a series of coordinated efforts in order to incorporate the agenda's 17 goals and 169 objectives in its National Development Plan, so that these long term goals can be institutionalized. A SDGs High Level Council and a Technical Secretariat are being created, so that the objectives can be operationalized. Both organisms will have an inter-governmental character and will have coordination and consultation mechanisms with organized civil society, the academy, the private sector, as well as non-governmental institutions.

In the case of the Ministry of Women, the need to strengthen the inter-institutional coordination has already been recognized so that gender-related objectives can be mainstreamed throughout the government agenda and State institutions. This is being carried out at the local scope, with the support of the Ministry, its regional directorates, institutional and municipal instances. The articulation with other offices such as the Costa Rican Network of Women in Municipalities, organized groups of women, among them the Women's Forum, has become another valuable tool in order to widely implement the Women's Agenda by 2030.

Something we recognize as fundamental to make accountability systems work is to consolidate collective action, within rights groups and within associations. Coordination and leadership by national organisms for gender equality and across governmental bodies will strengthen the gender equality agenda.

Strong coordination with civil society organizations, especially women's advocacy and human rights groups, is fundamental for a gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, having women's role been recognized as key in promoting reform, impacting policies and bolstering accountability. In this way, and from the principle that women are agents of change and development; their empowerment from early age, envisages the possibility of developing concrete actions that will ensure that no woman or girl is left behind.

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In this regard, I would like to thank the Secretary General for having had the initiative of convening the High Level Panel on the Economic Empowerment of Women, which he announced yesterday in Davos. Our President, Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís, will have the honor to co-chair the panel along with the Secretary General. The economic empowerment of women and girls is an issue we consider a cornerstone so that sustainable development can be fully achieved.

I thank you.