



Meeting of the
**Presiding Officers
of the Regional
Conference on Women**
in Latin America and the Caribbean
23–25 February 2021

25 February 2021

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Sixtieth meeting of the Presiding Officers
of the Regional Conference on Women
in Latin America and the Caribbean

Virtual meeting, 23–25 February 2021

**DECLARATION BY MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL AUTHORITIES
OF NATIONAL MACHINERIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN
OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN FOR THE SIXTY-FIFTH SESSION
OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**



**“WOMEN’S FULL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION AND DECISION-MAKING
IN PUBLIC LIFE, AS WELL AS THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE, FOR ACHIEVING
GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS”**

LATIN AMERICAN CARIBBEAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION

24 and 25 February 2021

We, the ministers and high-level authorities of the national machineries for the advancement of women in Latin America and the Caribbean, convened virtually in the framework of the sixtieth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, on 24 and 25 February 2021, at the regional consultation prior to the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, whose priority theme is “Women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”, and which will be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 15 to 26 March 2021,

Bearing in mind the obligations assumed by States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and its Optional Protocol, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its Optional Protocols, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the conventions of the International Labour Organization, especially No. 100, No. 156, No. 169, No. 189 and No. 190, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990), the American Convention on Human Rights (1969), the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), the Inter-American Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance (2013), the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance (2013), the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons (2015), as well as other relevant conventions and treaties, which establish an international legal framework to protect, respect and guarantee all the human rights of women, adolescents and girls in all their diversity, as well as the principle of non-discrimination, and to achieve gender equality,

Reaffirming the commitments assumed by States in the Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, 2001), the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024) (2014), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2016), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (2018), the International Conferences on Financing for Development (Monterrey, 2001; Doha, 2008; and Addis Ababa, 2015), the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework (2011), the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), especially through Goal 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”,

Confirming the continued relevance of the commitments undertaken by the States members of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean that make up the Regional Gender Agenda and are included in the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women into Latin American Economic and Social Development (1977), the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995–2001 (1994), the Santiago Consensus (1997), the Lima Consensus (2000), the Mexico City Consensus (2004), the Quito Consensus (2007), the Brasilia Consensus (2010), the Santo Domingo Consensus (2013), the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (2013), the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 (2016), and the Santiago Commitment (2020),

Considering that the crisis resulting from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has a disproportionately high impact on women and girls in all their diversity, deepening the multiple and intersecting forms of violence, discrimination and exclusion and the structural challenges of gender inequality, including worsening barriers to their participation in public life and in decision-making, threatening the gains made over the past 25 years in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment and autonomy,

Recognizing the additional burden of care borne by women, which has increased in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and expressing our concern about the negative impact that this additional burden may have on women in terms of their opportunities for full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, especially for those who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization,

Considering that both a secular State and the implementation of participatory forms of government are guarantees for the effective exercise of human rights and the consolidation of democracy, transparency and governance,

Considering also that funding for women's participation in public life is scarce, a situation that is exacerbated in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and stressing that new models of fund-raising and financing mechanisms need to be developed to ensure that women have the same opportunities as men to participate and be involved in decision-making in public life,

Recognizing the progress made in the region towards parity democracies, including the adoption of laws and public policies, the effective inclusion of women in the different branches and levels of the State, and the implementation of mechanisms to promote the participation of women in all their diversity from an intersectional perspective and to eradicate discrimination and violence against women in public life, we agree to:

1. *Reaffirm* our commitment to take all necessary measures to accelerate the effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Regional Gender Agenda, strengthening gender institutions and architecture through the prioritization of machineries for the advancement of women and gender mainstreaming at the different levels of the State, by increasing the allocation of financial, technical and human resources, gender budgeting, and monitoring and accountability, with citizen participation, which will foster public policies for response to the COVID-19 pandemic and a transformative and a gender-equal post-pandemic recovery;

2. *Redouble* efforts and commitment to make gender parity a State policy and to ensure women's equal access to decision-making positions in all branches and areas of the State, including the judiciary, and in national, subnational and local governments, through legislative and electoral initiatives and measures to ensure parity representation in all areas and levels of political power;

3. *Promote* mechanisms for greater inclusion of women in all their diversity, as well as women's organizations, including civil society and women's experts and leaders, in crisis response and recovery, especially in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring their equal participation in advisory boards, standing committees and other decision-making and monitoring bodies or spaces, to ensure the incorporation of gender, human rights and intersectionality perspectives in the response to the health emergency and subsequent recovery;

4. *Reaffirm* our commitment to implement gender-sensitive countercyclical policies, in order to mitigate the impact of economic crises and recessions on the lives of women and girls and promote regulatory frameworks and policies to galvanize the economy in key sectors, including the care economy, as a condition for women's full and effective participation in the response to the COVID-19 crisis and the subsequent recovery, as well as in public life and decision-making more broadly;

5. *Also reaffirm* our commitment to promote comprehensive care systems from a gender, human rights, intersectional and intercultural perspective that fosters co-responsibility between men and women and between the State, the market, families and the community, and that includes policies that are coordinated in relation to time, resources, benefits and universal, good-quality public services to meet the different care needs of the population, as part of social protection systems;

6. *Promote* measures, including changes at the legislative level, affirmative policies, specific budget allocations and political training and education initiatives for leadership by women leadership in all their diversity, aimed at promoting gender parity, inclusion and ethnic and racial alternation in all branches of the State, in special and autonomous regimes, at the national, subnational and local levels, in private institutions and in the labour, trade union and academic spheres, in order to strengthen democracies in Latin America and the Caribbean, from an intersectional perspective;

7. *Strengthen* the effective implementation of statistical information systems with disaggregated data that support analyses from a gender perspective and with an intersectional approach, for the purpose of designing public policies for gender equality and measuring fulfilment of the commitments assumed by States to achieve parity;

8. *Emphasize* the importance of developing and consolidating permanent initiatives, regulations and inclusive electoral policies that lead organizations and political parties to mainstream the agendas of women in all their diversity and gender and human rights perspectives, especially with regard to their content, financing, actions and statutes, as well as the importance of ensuring the equal participation, empowerment, autonomy and leadership of women and of urging the development of internal protocols for action to prevent, address, punish and eliminate violence against women in political life;

9. *Strengthen* mechanisms for observing and monitoring electoral processes with a gender perspective as instruments for ensuring respect for women's political rights;

10. *Promote* concrete measures to improve transparency and guarantee equal access to public campaign financing through gender-sensitive political financing;

11. *Encourage* sustained efforts to guarantee, from an intersectional perspective, the protection of the human rights of women participating in political and public life, women human rights defenders and women journalists, and condemn political violence against women, including violence perpetrated against them when they enter decision-making spaces and violence manifested in the sphere of information and communication technologies and social networks;

12. *Reaffirm* our commitment to promote the enactment and implementation of legislation, multisectoral policies, comprehensive action plans and education and sensitization programmes, to prevent, address, punish and eliminate the different forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls in the private, public, political, economic, institutional and symbolic spheres, as prerogatives for the full and effective participation of women, in all their diversity, in public life;

13. *Promote* the elimination of legal and institutional obstacles in order to ensure women's effective access to prompt and expeditious justice, to end impunity, and to ensure reparation and essential services in cases of violence, especially in the case of sexual violence;

14. *Also promote* universal access to and financing for comprehensive, accessible, affordable and good-quality health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, for women, adolescents and girls in all their diversity, as a measure to promote women's empowerment and access to public life;

15. *Further promote* the full exercise of sexual and reproductive rights in relation to: comprehensive sexuality information and education; safe, good-quality abortion services, in those cases where abortion is legal or decriminalized under national legislation; contraception; integrated social health-care services; maternal mortality; sexual orientation and gender identity; universal and accessible services, disability and old age; eradication of child pregnancy; prevention of adolescent pregnancy and motherhood; sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, health emergencies; healthy maternity; and technological development; as well as different types of family in accordance with national legislation;

16. *Foster* measures to ensure the full and effective participation of women at all levels and in all stages of peace processes and mediation efforts, the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacekeeping and peacebuilding and recovery, as established in Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security (2000) and other resolutions relating to the women, peace and security agenda;

17. *Advance* in building a gender, intersectional, intercultural and rights perspective into national policies and budgeted programmes on sustainable development, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction, especially in the most vulnerable territories, strengthening women's participation and the inclusion of gender equality in needs assessments and response plans, as well as in the planning and execution of public investment for reconstruction;

18. *Formulate and implement* e-government policies with a gender, intersectionality and interculturality approach that increase the efficiency and quality of public services, access to information, transparency, the use of open data, citizen participation and accountability, and that ensure the confidentiality and protection of user data;

19. *Design and implement* specific programmes to close gender gaps in access, use and skills in the fields of science, technology and innovation and strengthen the capacities of women in all their diversity to participate in political and public life in order to allow their full integration into digital ecosystems;

20. *Recognize* the contribution of women's and feminist movements in the region to the strengthening of democracy, advances in gender equality, the development of institutions and the formulation and implementation of public policies for equality, and highlight the importance of increasing specific funds and the direct allocation of resources to women's organizations and feminist movements;

21. *Welcome* the holding of the Generation Equality Forum, convened by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and co-chaired by Mexico and France, with the leadership and participation of civil society, as a global intersectoral and intergenerational gathering for gender equality, which will begin virtually in Mexico City on 29, 30 and 31 March and will continue in Paris in the second half of 2021, and urge all countries of the region to participate actively and with commitment in this process;

22. *Thank* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for their contribution to this regional consultation prior to the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, within the framework of the sixtieth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean;

23. *Disseminate* this declaration among the ministries of foreign affairs of the governments of the region, as a contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean to the negotiation of the conclusions that will be adopted at the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women;

24. *Request* the Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean to convey this declaration, as a contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean, to the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixty-fifth session;

25. *Congratulate* the Government of Chile, in its capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and commend the Government of Argentina and the Government of Mexico, in their capacity as Vice-Chairs, for their contributions in moderating the regional consultation prior to the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held within the framework of the sixtieth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.