



## *Overview of women in Latin America and the Caribbean in unstable economic contexts*

**INPUT FOR THE XIV REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN OF THE:**

**NGOs Committee for CSW from Latin America and the Caribbean**



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## SYNTHESIS

### OBSTACLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Women's economic autonomy and their working participation**

##### **Obstacles:**

- The feminine working participation has stagnated in the past years, and domestic work is the exception to this stagnation, with a 11,2% employment rate for women in the region.
- The employment gap for the regional average is 14,5%. This is mainly due to the horizontal segregation (sectors of the economy in which they work) and to vertical segregation (limitations on the access to hierarchical positions).
- Women happen to be over-represented in part-time jobs, and this situation is made worse among women with lower levels of education and income.
- Women are mainly employed in the service sector, within which they are the majority in the care sector, and in second place in the manufacturing sector.
- It is estimated that 2/3 of the workers are in the informal sector. Jobs in which women are employed are of low productivity, characterized by the informality of labor relations and the flexibility of the daily working day.
- It implies that they do not have access to social benefits, such as pensions and health services, through work.

- The feminine labor participation does not imply changes in men's participation in the domestic and care responsibilities of households.
- Women spend more hours per week than men at work. If time-use is analyzed, women are employed, on average more than twice as much time than men in TNR. This gap is widened between women and men with no income of their own.
- Strategies taken by women to reconcile family life and work life vary between social classes and educational levels.

**Recommendations:**

- While a number of countries has incorporated legislation to regulate and formalize domestic work in particular households, it is necessary for all countries of the region to adopt similar legislation, and to encourage registration programs of domestic work to motivate its formalization.
- An important explanatory factor of vertical and horizontal segregation of the PLF is the current care regimes. The international organizations' agenda has recognized the importance and the value of care work. It is necessary for the states to adopt co-responsible policies for dependent people's care (older adults, with disabilities and children in early childhood) of full-scale and of gender perspective. Amongst the remedies, it's necessary to have:
  - The extension of childcare services of universal character and concordant with working hours.
  - The expanding of day homes' offer for older adults or for adults with disability which generates severe dependence.
  - That maternity leaves should no longer be the most regressive social policies, to this end, it is important universalizing the right to maternity leave for all women – especially considering that if it remains a measure linked to a formal employment relationship, it becomes a privilege and not a right.
  - Extend paternity leave to ensure greater male participation in the TNR, and to eliminate the barrier women's entry into labor participation associated with motherhood. By sharing care, the costs associated to parenting would not be exclusive to women, and therefore one of the barriers they have to enter the work market would be eliminated.
- Incorporate in the provisional systems the recognition of years of inactivity due to birth and upbringing of children for the calculation of women's pension benefit.

## Women in the digital area

### **Impediments:**

- It is estimated that women in the region: represent 49% of Internet users, are 21% less likely to have their own mobile phone, and represent less than 20% of TIC specialists.
- Technology gaps are tied to residence areas: people who live in urban areas are twice more likely to accede to Internet than people who live in rural areas (46.7% and 25.7% respectively), and access to computers among those living in rural areas is of 30%.
- Women are more likely to lose their jobs because of technological changes. Care sector is the most affected by these changes. This indicates that horizontal segregation in the labor market will maintain.
- Works in digital platforms reproduce the same gender bias observed in traditional economy: bigger masculine participation in the sector, and horizontal segmentation.

### **Recommendations:**

- Achieve state agreements to include in mandatory education study programs contents about STEM fields, in order to guarantee a knowledge brink on the topic in the system education for all citizens independently of their residence areas (urban, rural), and of their kind of access to education (public state, private, subsidized)
- Promote special incentive programs for girls and teenager participation in the use of technologies and capacity development in STEM. The UNESCO SAGA program can be a good starting point to take actions in this line.
- Work on specific programs which promote the use of technologies in agricultural processes, escorting women from rural areas for:
  - Selection process of seed,
  - Management of cattle,
  - Sale of production.
- Countries of the region must incorporate legislation that regularize the kind of work relations that are generated by platform economy, creating labor protection elements for people who sell their services, for users that contract, and implementing regulations concerning limits and responsibilities of platform administrators, and contractual relationships that are generated around them.

## Women's rights versus public-private partnerships (PPP)

### **Obstacles:**

- Elites have adapted to economic changes on the basis of various strategies to continue capturing states. The current form of elite domination is through public-private partnerships.
- PPPs allow companies to achieve favorable fiscal agreements -affecting the fiscal capacity of States, and with it the ability to take distributive and redistributive actions that favor social equity.
- PPPs impact on women's working conditions, limit public income and services and public policies as well.
- PPPs impact negatively on the provision of public services by using market strategies contrary to the notion of universality in access to services such as health and education, which has repercussions on the affiliation of gender gaps (educational, of personal income, of physic autonomy amongst the most preeminent) and on women's human rights' violations.

### **Recommendations:**

- Limit through legislation the presence of PPPs in the provision of social services which directly affect human rights, such as access to health, education and housing.
- Establish criteria of periodic accountability and of sanctionatory regimes for private companies that grant services through PPPs that:
  - Do not comply with the suggested progress
  - Sub-execute budget items
  - Do not reinvest the profits in the country of execution of the PPP.

Commercialize public services in violation of the universality of human rights.