

DISCUSSION PAPER

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES
ON THE 2030 AGENDA
IN ECUADOR: SELECTIVE
ENGAGEMENT, INCLUSIONS
AND OMISSIONS



No. 34, March 2020

ANA MARÍA LARREA, GIOCONDA HERRERA

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ACRONYMS

AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CNIG	National Council for Gender Equality
COIP	Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code
CONAMU	National Women's Council
CSO	civil society organization
DINAPEN	National Special Police Unit for Children and Youth
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ENIPLA	National Intersectoral Strategy for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy and Family Planning
GDP	gross domestic product
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
INEC	National Institute for Statistics and Censuses
LGBTQI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer and intersex
MCDS	Ministry for Coordination of Social Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MSP	Ministry of Public Health
NGO	non-governmental organization
PEVCM	Plan to Eradicate Violence against Women
PND	National Development Plan 2017-2021
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SENPLADES	National Secretariat for Planning and Development
SETECI	International Cooperation Secretariat
STI	sexually transmitted infection
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VNR	Voluntary National Review

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SUMMARY

This report examines how the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been integrated into the national debate on gender equality in Ecuador. It identifies which policies from that agenda have been taken into account and which have been rejected, as well as how the actors involved in clarifying the scope of these policies have coordinated their activities with the 2030 Agenda. We look at the actions of the women's movements, sexual diversity organizations, public officials and United Nations agencies working on gender equality. The report attempts to answer the following questions: How does the 2030 Agenda interact with the national gender equality agenda

in Ecuador? Where do they intersect and what are their points of contention? And how has the global agenda influenced national policies and actions on gender equality and women's rights in Ecuador? The report also assesses whether women's and sexual diversity organizations are aware of and incorporate the 2030 Agenda and, conversely, whether the Agenda addresses the debates and demands made by women's and LGBTQI movements in Ecuador in recent years. Lastly, the report provides some recommendations on how to better translate issues of gender equality coming from the UN 2030 Agenda into national gender policies in Ecuador.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce rapport examine dans quelle mesure le Programme de développement durable à l'horizon 2030 a été intégré dans le débat national sur l'égalité des sexes en Equateur. Il recense les politiques émanant de ce Programme qui ont été prises en compte et celles qui ont été rejetées, et comment les acteurs chargés d'évaluer l'étendue de ces politiques ont coordonné leurs activités avec le Programme 2030. Nous tenons compte des actions des mouvements de femmes, des organisations chargées de défendre la diversité sexuelle, des agences de l'ONU et des fonctionnaires qui travaillent sur la question de l'égalité des sexes. Ce rapport s'emploie à répondre aux questions suivantes : Comment le Programme 2030 interagit-il avec le programme chargé de l'égalité des sexes en Equateur ?

Où se recoupent-ils et quels sont leurs points de friction ? Et comment le programme mondial a-t-il influencé les actions et politiques nationales sur l'égalité des sexes et les droits des femmes en Equateur ? Le rapport examine aussi dans quelle mesure les organisations de femmes et celles qui sont chargées de lutter en faveur de la diversité sexuelle connaissent et intègrent le Programme 2030 et comment le Programme aborde les débats et les questions posées par les mouvements des femmes et LGBTQI en Equateur ces dernières années. Enfin, ce rapport formule certaines recommandations quant à la manière de mieux traduire les questions liées à l'égalité des sexes émanant du Programme de l'ONU 2030 en politiques nationales en faveur de l'égalité des sexes en Equateur.

RESUMEN

En este informe se examina de qué manera se incorporó la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible al debate nacional sobre igualdad de género en el Ecuador. En él se identifican qué políticas de la Agenda 2030 han sido consideradas y cuáles rechazadas, así como el modo en que los actores involucrados en determinar el alcance de estas políticas coordinaron sus actividades con la Agenda 2030. Se analizan las acciones de los movimientos de mujeres, las organizaciones por la diversidad sexual, funcionarias y funcionarios públicos y los organismos de las Naciones Unidas que trabajan en pos de la igualdad de género. En el informe se busca dar respuesta a las siguientes preguntas: ¿de qué manera la Agenda 2030 interactúa con la agenda nacional por la igualdad de género en el

Ecuador?, ¿cuáles son sus puntos de coincidencia y de desacuerdo?, y ¿cuál ha sido la influencia de la agenda global en las políticas y las medidas nacionales para la igualdad de género y los derechos de las mujeres en el Ecuador? En el informe también se examina si las organizaciones de mujeres y por la diversidad sexual conocen e incorporan la Agenda 2030 y, a la inversa, si en la Agenda 2030 se abordan los debates y las demandas de los movimientos de mujeres y LGBTQI del Ecuador en los últimos años. Finalmente, se ofrecen algunas recomendaciones acerca de cómo alcanzar en las políticas nacionales de igualdad de género del Ecuador una mejor traducción de las cuestiones de igualdad de género tratadas en la Agenda 2030 de las Naciones Unidas.

1.

INTRODUCTION

This report examines how the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been integrated into the national debate on gender equality in Ecuador. The relationship between global and national agendas is particularly relevant in the debate on gender policies. Various studies have shown the strategic importance of the Beijing Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 (UN General Assembly 1995) for the emergence of institutional mechanisms for gender equality in Latin America during the following decade. Also, given its binding character, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has been a useful instrument for both civil society and feminist movements to demand and negotiate gender policies with the state (Guzmán 2001; Lind 2005).

In Ecuador, the relationship between global and national gender equality agendas has been discussed by academics and women's movements since the 2000s. Some works pointed out that although global agendas such as the Beijing Platform for Action - as well as the Programme of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo (UN General Assembly 1994) — helped to legitimize some of the demands already being made by women's movements at the local and national level, the integration of these demands into public policies was more complex. The instrumentalization of gender equality agendas and the loss of their transformative aspiration was also noted. Other works showed that some policy areas—such as social policies—were more receptive than others to the integration of a gender perspective. The role played by women's organizations in this relationship and the way in which their demands were or were not affected by institutionalization was also discussed (Herrera 2001, Lind 2005, León 1993).

Gender mainstreaming in subsequent global agendas, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN General Assembly 2015, hereafter 2030 Agenda), has meant the loss of some of the integrality and specificity of gender equality issues, as they are considered minimum targets to be reached. The 2030 Agenda is certainly much more extensive in its approach to gender equality and this is very welcome,

but the fact that gender equality is just one of many issues at stake adds complexity to the process of integrating it into national policies.

This report examines the ways in which the 2030 Agenda is currently being interpreted and integrated into national policies and processes. It seeks to identify the aspects that are being accepted and those that have been rejected, as well as how the actors involved—women's and sexual diversity organizations, feminists within the state, public officials and UN agencies working on gender equality—have coordinated their activities with the 2030 Agenda. It attempts to answer the following questions: How does the 2030 Agenda interact with the national gender equality agenda? Where do these agendas intersect and what are their points of contention? How has the global agenda influenced national policies and actions on gender equality and women's rights? Similarly, how does the national agenda incorporate the principles of the global one? The report also assesses whether women's and sexual diversity organizations are aware of and incorporate the 2030 Agenda into their activities and whether it addresses the debates and demands made in recent years by women's as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) movements in Ecuador.

Gender equality is understood here as a goal in its own right in the context of social and economic justice that seeks to eliminate all forms of gender-based

discrimination; that is to say, for reasons associated with the social construction and social representations that people attribute to women and men in social life. This idea encompasses the recognition of diverse gender identities. Another starting point is the diverse character of the state, in which groups that promote gender equality policies can coexist with groups that resist such policies, as well as the complexities of the institutionalization of gender equality policies, which are always affected by the power relation between the actors involved (León 1993; Levy 1996).

The national agenda on gender equality is understood as the relationship between social demands for gender equality and those public policies created or neglected by the state in the last 20 years. During this period, it focused on four main areas: (a) political participation, (b) economic rights, (c) sexual and reproductive rights and (d) violence against women.

In this report we have chosen to focus on the latter three, which we consider disputed areas within both the state and feminist organizations and for which there is still much to be done. We start by assuming that, although important inequalities in women's political participation still remain—especially among indigenous women and those of African descent, and particularly in local governments—significant progress has been achieved in the five roles of the central state (legislative, judicial, electoral, executive and transparency and social control) in the last 20 years. Furthermore, although these were already key themes in the demands of feminist groups in the 1990s, social and economic rights, sexual and reproductive rights and gender-based violence became more prominent in the debate from 2000 onwards, as we will see below.

Ecuador signed the 2030 Agenda in 2015, near the end of President Correa's 10 years in office (2007-2017). Its implementation was therefore launched in the context of transition from the government of Correa to that of President Moreno.

Although both Presidents belong to the same political movement, the transition was characterized by differences between them in various areas relevant to the national agenda on gender equality. On the one hand,

dialogue was enabled with women's organizations, resulting in the movement having real influence on previously neglected areas such as the drafting and passing of a law on gender-based violence, the capacity of the state to report and take action in cases of sexual abuse in educational settings and a shift in policies on teenage pregnancy. On the other hand, measures began to be taken to reduce the size of the state in the context of fiscal adjustment policies, which affected the implementation of certain gender policies, as we will see below, thereby jeopardizing the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. In general, the Moreno government marks the end of the so-called post-neoliberal approach that characterized the previous government and under which the state played a central role in wealth distribution, planning and development.¹

The 2030 Agenda was signed in a year that marked the beginning of a major economic recession for which there are still no clear exit signs. This is because gross domestic product (GDP) grew at unprecedented rates in the 2000s due to the oil boom, with peaks of 6.4 per cent in 2008 and 7.2 per cent in 2011. These rates then fell sharply in 2015, when the economy grew by 0.3 per cent. For 2020, a growth of 0.5 per cent is expected.² Although underemployment is a structural problem in Ecuador, it is clear that the economic recession underway since 2014 has had a major impact on decent work, which has decreased in the last three years (Olmedo 2018). Gender differences in the context of the labour crisis are more visible, as will be seen below.

The start of President Moreno's term was marked by three factors relevant to the 2030 Agenda: the launch of a new National Development Plan; the announcement of a national dialogue, resulting in widespread expectations for women's organizations in the country; and interest expressed by the Government in strengthening cooperation with the UN system. The Government committed to compiling its first Voluntary National Review for the 2030 Agenda, which was submitted in 2018, and reinforced its links with the United Nations through the nomination and

1 For a discussion on the role of the state in the post-neoliberal policies of President Correa, see Sanchez and Polga-Hecimovich 2018.

2 IMF 2019.

subsequent election of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs as President of the General Assembly. These three initiatives can be seen as facilitating factors to incorporate the 2030 Agenda into national policies through the creation of a receptive framework for gender equality proposals.

In order to understand the reception and integration of the 2030 Agenda into national frameworks, we start by analysing the relationship between the state and the women's and LGBTQI movements in Ecuador over the last 20 years, which led to the enhancement of rights through two Constituent Assemblies (1998 and 2008). However, the rise of conservative social movements with links to the Catholic and Evangelical churches that oppose gender equality is jeopardizing these rights. These groups have been influencing legislative procedures in order to halt or even reverse certain achievements, especially in the fields of sexual and reproductive rights and sexual diversity. The next section of this report discusses this relationship.

The third section introduces the main gender equality achievements in Ecuador. A brief summary of the country's two Constituent Assemblies is followed by an analysis of the relationship between women's and LGBTQI movements and the state in the last decade. It then introduces progress and setbacks for the 2030 Agenda.

The fourth section analyses the uses, interpretations and integration of the 2030 Agenda by the state and those civil society organizations (CSOs) advocating for gender equality. It examines the incorporation or omission of the 2030 Agenda goals and targets on gender equality in state planning instruments, statistical tools and indicators and public policies. It also looks at the strategies implemented by CSOs to achieve their goals and the role, if any, that the 2030 Agenda plays within these strategies. Finally, the conclusions outline the potential risks, opportunities and challenges in the struggle for gender equality in relation to the 2030 Agenda.

In terms of methodology, 22 in-depth interviews were conducted: three with UN officers; nine with current and former government officials working on gender equality, planning, education, health, employment and economic and social inclusion; and 10 with representatives of feminist organizations, including two indigenous women, two transfeminists, three women's rights advocates active since the 1980s and three younger women's rights activists (see Annex 1). It should be pointed out that three of the female public officials interviewed also belong to feminist organizations. The analysis employs descriptive statistics to illustrate the outcomes of the main public policies for gender equality and reviews relevant documents from the academic sector and social and governmental organizations.

2.

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN ECUADOR OVER THE LAST 40 YEARS

Changes towards gender equality in Ecuador in recent years are the result of the active involvement of women's organizations since the 1980s, when the first women's research and advocacy centres emerged (Troya 2007; Herrera 2007). During the 1980s, both middle- and working-class women's groups were formed. The former generally came from the left-wing activist movement, had an anti-state and anti-party attitude and focused on women's demands for bodily autonomy, sexuality, ending violence against women and creating a countercultural public forum (Herrera 2007). Working-class women's organizations emerged alongside the growing involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the development of projects to meet the practical and strategic needs of poor women, especially with the support of international cooperation (Rodríguez 1998; Lind 2005).

"We, the 'middle-class', [...] supported and assisted working-class women with their problems without necessarily seeing the problems we ourselves were experiencing [...]. We then had to recognize that violence, for instance, could affect us as well." (Interview with Lizi Ernst, Coalición Nacional de Mujeres del Ecuador)

During the 1990s, the women's movement became stronger and more diverse; nationwide organizations emerged and, for the first time, groups of indigenous women and those of African descent were created (Troya 2007). By the late 1990s, the struggle to combat violence against women had mobilized the organizations and, in 1995, the National Congress passed the Law on Violence against Women and the Family. The following year, the National Women's Council, a body under the Presidency of the Republic, was created, with an executive board made up of representatives from CSOs and the state. Until being abolished in 2008, it worked to mainstream gender equality policies in the country. In 1997, homosexuality was decriminalized,

resulting in the emergence of the country's LGBTQI movement.

At that time, many women's organizations focused on state advocacy as a way to channel their demands. Progress in gender equality during the 1990s has been seen as the result of conjoining international agendas—ICPD 1994 and Beijing 1995—and the lobbying of the women's movement and its extensive capacity for state advocacy. Despite not being a mass movement, it succeeded in securing a number of important rights for women in the 1998 Constitution and at state level (Lind 2005; Valladares 2004; Herrera 2001b).

Between 1999 and 2000, Ecuador suffered the worst economic and political crisis of the second half of the twentieth century, which led to soaring unemployment and poverty, the collapse of much of the financial system, the dollarization of the economy and the mass migration of women and men from all over the country to work in Spain and the United States. In this context, the limitations of women's organizations' work with

the state started to become clear: Focusing the agenda on promoting women's political participation and the institutionalization of gender equality issues overlooked the concerns for economic redistribution for women and sexual rights. In many cases, this institutionalization led to the gender-based approach losing its initial transformative momentum (Herrera 2001b; Vega 2000).

Some of the organizations created in the new millennium began to distance themselves from the traditional organizations. They criticized the movement for its institutionalization and permanent negotiation with the state, demanding greater autonomy and more radical agendas for issues promoted by their predecessors. They wanted to take their struggles to the streets and the civil society arena. Moreover, issues that had been in the background in the 1990s, such as calls to legalize abortion, now emerged (Varea 2015). These changes were also caused by a generation gap, as some new women's organizations had a broad base of young women members who did not feel represented by the groups from the 1990s.

In 2007, when the Constituent Assembly was set up, there were many social organizations eager to participate and propose demands for the new constitutional text. Women's organizations were active participants in the process in a variety of ways: Some groups called for the inclusion of rights associated with the traditional demands of the institutionalized women's movement, while demands from the newer organizations included the legalization of abortion, the recognition of sexual diversity and what various youth groups, such as Casa Feminista Rosa and Coordinadora Política Juvenil, called "the decriminalization of poverty" in reference to the situation of women imprisoned for minor drug-trafficking offences.

"In 2007, [...] all organizations wanted to put forward their proposals for the Constituent Assembly, as well as the full diversity of the women's movement, but there were those advocating for a more institutional role [...], I don't know, parity in political participation, representative democracy. There was also an alternative women's movement that

focused more on feminism and autonomy, that gathered here in Quito, especially Casa Feminista de Rosa." (Interview with Ana Acosta and Verónica Calvopiña, El Churo)

Feminist advocacy strategies also diversified compared to the 1998 constitutional process. In addition to traditional advocacy strategies, feminists used direct political action to challenge assembly members.

With their challenging of hegemonic cultural patterns, the women's movement³ opened the way for new demands relating to sexual diversity (interview with Soledad Puente, National Council for Gender Equality, CNIG, expert). The new millennium was also characterized by the emergence of LGBTQI demands and organizations to advocate for their rights. The need to separate the demands relating to sexual rights from more traditional calls for reproductive rights in the agenda gained ground, resulting in the questioning of female/male binarism in the women's movement itself, where transsexual persons found no support. "They are more defiant and enrich the understanding of the women's movement with this defiance, so the women's movement has to become more inclusive" (interview with Soledad Puente, CNIG expert).

A feminist agenda arose in the 2000s, emphasizing and focusing on a number of areas:

"I'm from [...], you could say, the 'autonomous feminism' and 'transfeminism' wing, which brought together [...] a few feminists who first addressed the issues of sexual and reproductive rights, those who first emphasized the centrality of the body, [...] as well as part of the LGBTQI movement, which is why I say I'm a transfeminist, focusing mainly on socio-economic and cultural demands, especially those of trans sex workers, but obviously from a perspective encompassing the rest of the LGBTQI movement; so this is my 'commitment', transfeminism. I think it's a side issue compared with more formal forums for demands relating

3 We refer here to all formal and informal social organizations, with various degrees of organization and territorial scope (national and local), and various agendas with a common denominator, namely the fight for gender equality.

to gender equality.” (Interview with Elizabeth Vásquez, LGBTQI activist)

Other organizations were created that questioned the patriarchal system and equated it with capitalism, thereby expanding the gender equality agenda to challenge the development model and the economic and labour system. They began to demand a role for women in the social organization of care work and its relationship with care for the environment. Some organizations who played an important role in their agenda sought to combine the demands for gender equality with environmentalist demands, thus challenging extractive policies. This led to the coordination of feminist and environmental efforts. Under an ecofeminist approach, urban feminist groups took part in demonstrations organized by Amazonian women against extractivism and in anti-mining protests, based on the notion that capitalist societies create parallel domination processes for women and the environment, in the context of feminist ecological demands. The feminist agenda was thus expanded to include the building of a new model of society.

An important landmark in the mobilization of women’s organizations in Ecuador was the approval of the new Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code (COIP) in 2013. In this case, older organizations who were opposed to the elimination of women’s police stations mobilized alongside youth organizations to call for the decriminalization of abortion due to rape.

These circumstances also marked the return to the public arena of organized conservative groups that opposed gender-related demands for sexual and reproductive rights and with a clear advocacy agenda at state level and in public opinion. These groups first mobilized in 2004, demanding the removal from the market of widely used contraceptive methods. This resulted in women’s groups becoming more radical and intensifying discussions within women’s organizations on legalizing abortion (Varea 2015).

The conservative groups mobilized again during the 2008 Constituent Assembly, when they fought against progress in legalizing abortion and defended

the right to life of the unborn (Maldonado 2009). Their main demand was for the Constitution to recognize the right to life from conception. They used a powerful media campaign during the 2008 electoral campaign to reject the new Constitution, accusing it of being “pro-abortion”. In 2013, they actively opposed the Ministry of Public Health handing out emergency contraception, describing it as an abortifacient, and started a new campaign to fight against the decriminalization of abortion due to rape. In 2017 and 2018, they organized marches in Ecuador’s main cities against the so-called ‘gender ideology’ under the slogan ‘Hands off my kids’ as part of an international conservative offensive that enjoys substantial global financial backing.

In summary, it is clear that during the last 20 years, the feminist movement has diversified, new young women’s organizations have emerged in urban and rural areas—indigenous women, those of African descent and *mestiza* women—and the number of sexual diversity organizations has grown rapidly. There have also been more calls for a feminist agenda and identity.

“I believe that there is a new time for feminist participation and action, which did not previously go by this name, or rather, before it wasn’t even called a feminist movement. But now we do talk of feminist cooperation and movement, fear has disappeared, despite the stigma. It’s called a feminist platform, and I believe that this is a fundamental change.” (Interview with Ana Acosta and Verónica Calvopiña, El Churo)

Strategies for action have also broadened: Activism for the institutionalization of public policies is no longer necessarily a priority for action but, rather, women now work to strengthen their organizations and make demands to the state in a way that combines lobbying with street activities. Despite this diversity, there have been important agreements on key situations that have made it possible to mitigate conflicts and grow into a stronger movement, as was seen when all organizations in the country came together to march against violence over the past three years.

"I believe that this 'row' between a more autonomous, younger movement and the more traditional movement ended up making the women's movement grow as a whole, achieving greater political maturity. This seems to me to be more akin to what feminism is: understanding solidarity, understanding another way to get along. It isn't a perfect relationship because the movement is very complex, and you have 10,000 positions and a lot of fights for recognition. But I think that we have succeeded in achieving political synergies at certain times." (Interview with Ana Vera, Surkuna)

"Well, we've taken part in the Vivas Nos Queremos [We want us all alive] march ever since the first year, which was 2016. Women from everywhere took part. It's a nationwide march and emerged in this new wave of participation through digital activism. One of its characteristics is that it brought us all together: those who carry out the fight within the state, those outside it, the independents,

democrats, dinosaurs, old and young, anarchists, feminists, Twitter users, and so on. It was a unifying and intergenerational platform. So what do the older members of the women's movement say about it? They say that they hadn't seen such a massive feminist mobilization here in the country before. I see it as a new wave, because I didn't see this happen before when we called for feminist action." (Interview with Ana Acosta and Verónica Calvopiña, El Churo)

Finally, the twenty-first century has also been a backdrop for action by groups with clear international backing that are opposed to changes in sexual and reproductive rights and that employ mass political advocacy strategies to question 'gender ideology' and mobilize against rights-based health and education laws and policies. This complicates the battleground for gender equality and threatens the implementation of actions relating to gender equality in the 2030 Agenda.

3.

THE GENDER EQUALITY AGENDA IN ECUADOR

3.1.

An overview of the Constituent Assembly processes

The 1998 and 2008 Constituent Assemblies were key moments in the fight for, and inclusion of, important rights for women and LGBTQI people. The various voices heard in this study agreed on the importance of both processes in advancing the agenda and recognized that women's organizations participated in various ways. In 1998, such organizations worked under the momentum built up by the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing, which served as a basis for proposals on women's rights. The 1998 Constitution contained 36 of the 38 proposals put forward by women's organizations (interview with Lola Valladares, United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA).

“The 1998 Constituent Assembly adopted formal equality, successfully working on the questions of parity and non-discrimination based on sexual orientation, and established the basis for greater radicalization of the women's movement. The 2008 Constituent Assembly reflected the changes experienced in the women's movement and the country's sexual diversity. The demands put forward at that time stemmed from a clearly feminist agenda and were much more radical than those proposed in 1998, which were based more on women's rights than on a wider concept of gender that included demands based on sexual diversity.” (Interview with Elizabeth Vásquez, LGBTQI activist)

In 2008, the women's movement was more heterogeneous, consolidated and autonomous, with a variety of broader demands. Sexual diversity and the recognition of family diversity were major issues, and important women's social and economic rights gained recognition. The movement's greater autonomy, along

with the diverse make-up of the 2008 Constituent Assembly, with greater empathy among assembly members around gender equality, meant that international instruments were not as essential as in 1998:

“In our political agendas and relationship with the government, we had to rely on the United Nations to provide meaning for our proposals, to give force to our demands, so that what we were asking for would be approved, etc. So, for example, for the 1998 Constitution we worked with important agencies, like PAHO [the Pan-American Health Organization] on sexual and reproductive rights. It was a relationship of authority, and of support. The [2008] Constituent Assembly was a huge step forward, in which women and other groups jointly took part, writing together, because there had also been developments, moving from a sectoral view to say ‘No, we have a proposal for the country and we work together from this perspective.’” (Interview with Magdalena León, gender and economics activist)

The 2008 Constituent Assembly not only sought to meet the specific demands of women and sexual diversity groups but was also committed to building a new economic, social and political system. However, it also saw a confrontation with conservative groups, which, in 1998, had not acted as an organized movement with its own voice. The open confrontation between feminist and conservative elements meant that proposals for decriminalizing abortion and achieving equal marriage did not form part of the 2008 Constitution.

3.2.

The relationship between the state and women's organizations in the last decade

The relationship between the state and women's organizations in the last decade can be split into three periods. The first, from 2007 to 2012, lasted from the Constituent Assembly to the end of President Correa's second term and was characterized by major steps forward in the country's gender equality agenda. The second, from 2013 to May 2017, during President Correa's third term, was marked by setbacks in the agenda, especially for sexual and reproductive rights. The executive branch developed policies and actions opposed to these rights while CSOs denounced and resisted these developments in a dispute on the aims of the public agenda. It was also marked by a legislative majority for the government movement, which aligned itself with the conservative stance of the President of the Republic. The third, from May 2017 until now, has been a period of transition from the administration of President Correa to that of President Moreno. This is seen by feminist organizations as a time of greater political openness to incorporating a gender equality agenda, although in a context of fiscal adjustments and the abolition of public bodies, particularly the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Worship (hereafter Ministry of Justice), which may have a significant impact on the development of actual gender policies.

During the first period, various strands of the women's movement promoted the project for change, supported by the Citizens' Revolution⁴, especially the call for a new development model that would make it possible to tackle the unequal situation of women and recognize factors such as unpaid care and domestic work. According to Mancero (2017), during the first years of the Citizens' Revolution, with a number of feminists in state departments, an attempt was made to promote gender equality policies. However, this state feminism soon faded away due to the President's increasingly conservative opposition to feminist demands for sexual and reproductive rights, leading to what Mancero has called "the instrumental use of feminism" (ibid.).

"Until 2011, 2012, there was a lot of formal progress towards gender equality, for example: the criminalization of femicide, the legal characterization of hate crimes in 2009 ... and on LGBTQI matters there was much success, for instance, the example of sex change in the case of Estrella-Estévez, the equality law was introduced, a survey on gender-based violence was conducted, which is vital for public policy, and an initial survey on LGBTQI issues was carried out. But this positive wave gets lost around 2013, when the Assembly's composition changed. I remember that the Transition Commission⁵ took forever! And these things started to happen: abortion suffered a 'setback' in the Assembly [and] we began to come up against a number of 'ceilings'." (Interview with Elizabeth Vásquez, LGBTQI activist)

Other activists felt that the relationship with the state was more problematic due to symbolic violence⁶ by

4 Citizens' Revolution is the promotional name of former President Rafael Correa's government political proposal.

5 The 2008 Constitution created so-called Equality Councils charged with mainstreaming equality into public policy. The Gender Transition Commission was a temporary institution that in 2009 replaced the former National Council for Women (CONAMU)—a move that sparked protest and criticism by women's organizations. The transitional arrangement was replaced by a new Gender Equality Council in 2014.

6 Symbolic violence is the imposition on subordinated groups by the dominant class of an ideology that legitimates and naturalizes the status quo (Bourdieu 1979).

the President and the lack of political will to listen to women's demands.

“For us, the entire Correa government has posed many, many problems for women. We acknowledge that there has been some progress, but the women’s movement has been treated terribly, with great symbolic violence. All this led to the creation of a parallel women’s movement; ‘women with Correa, women without Correa’, and this really weakened the movement, just as it weakened all social movements.” (Interview with Lizi Ernst, Coalición Nacional de Mujeres del Ecuador)

For Lind (2012), it is a paradox that, on the one hand, a ‘revolution with a woman’s face’ was proposed—as Correa declared in his 2006 campaign when he suggested policies to eliminate gender-based violence, promote women’s access to employment, health and social security and ensure equal opportunities in all areas—while at the same time, expressing his disapproval of abortion, sex education, same-sex marriage and the ‘gender ideology’.

One of the critical issues during Correa’s government was its failure to define a state-led gender equality mechanism, which took seven years to achieve:

“This caused them a great deal of damage, as it ruled out the possibility of advocacy, it denied the possibility of making proposals, of making actual public policies. Gender became a cross-cutting issue but by removing ‘women’ as individuals. Until its very end, the Transition Commission led to the collapse of what at that time was, we said, a sufficiently strong and important institution, with a quite acceptable budget.” (Interview with Lizi Ernst, Coalición Nacional de Mujeres del Ecuador)

Although the guiding principle of institutionalizing gender equality policies was weakened, there were attempts during the implementation of the Plan to Eradicate Violence against Women (PEVCM), launched in 2007, to create departments responsible for these

policies in various ministries, such as education, health and justice. The only successful example was the Gender Equality Unit within the Ministry of Justice, the institution in charge of implementing the PEVCM since 2012. Gender equality sub-units were also created in the Judiciary Council, as well as gender equality councils within the District Attorney’s Office (interview with Miriam Alcívar, former PEVCM official).

However, some activists with links to the sexual diversity movement have a more positive view of the work of the Transition Commission in opening the way for matters relating to sexual diversity.

Dialogue with organizations in the women’s and sexual diversity movements by the Moreno government also allowed for the passing in 2018, with the active participation of women, of the Comprehensive Organic Law for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women. In addition, following allegations of sexual abuse in educational entities and pressure from some women’s organizations, the Ministry of Education launched programmes for the prevention of child sexual abuse (discussed below).

Despite this progress, women’s and sexual diversity organizations question the change in the government programme for managing economic policy and the restrictions this may impose on the realization of women’s rights from a structural perspective.

“Of course, we welcome the Satya case—that is to say, the recognition of the joint maternity of two women—and we also welcome the steps taken towards equal marriage, which are signs of progress, of course, but we are also worried that the main points on the agenda are more of a reformist agenda.” (Interview with Elizabeth Vásquez, LGBTQI activist)

The current President dissolved the Ministry of Justice; and currently the unit in charge of implementing the policies provided for in the recently enacted Law on Violence against Women is the Human Rights Secretary. Furthermore, in the memorandum sent by the executive branch to the National Assembly

7 The interviewee refers to the former National Council for Women (CONAMU).

on the 2019 General State Budget, 92 per cent of the budget allocated for programmes on violence against women was cut compared with 2018, leaving these activities practically devoid of resources.⁸

3.3.

Thematic areas: economic rights, sexual and reproductive rights and violence against women

As noted in the introduction, the issues on the gender equality agenda in Ecuador during the past 20 years can be placed into four broad categories: (a) political participation, (b) economic rights, (c) sexual and reproductive rights and (d) violence against women. In terms of political participation, the principles of parity and of having alternate women and men on lists in multi-person elections were enshrined in the Constitution of 2008 (Valle 2018; Archenti and Tula 2014), enabling a gradual increase in the representation of women in the National Assembly⁹ and putting Ecuador alongside the Plurinational State of Bolivia as the first countries in Latin America to apply the principle of parity in national elections. Progress in this area is unquestionable, and this report will therefore examine the other three thematic areas.

Economic rights

The approval of the Constitution in 2008 was a symbol of major progress for the gender equality agenda in terms of economic rights, particularly the recognition of care and the gradual universalization of social security, including for those undertaking unpaid domestic

work. Women's right to equal pay was established, maternity and breastfeeding rights for female workers were recognized—along with the right to paternity leave for male workers—and the state was required to develop policies to eliminate inequality and discrimination against income-generating women in their access to the factors of production (e.g., land, capital and physical assets).

In 2015, the National Assembly passed the Law on Labour Justice and the Recognition of Unpaid Domestic Work, which promoted the inclusion in the social security system of those undertaking unpaid domestic work, creating a state subsidy for the poorest women. The Law recognizes unpaid domestic work as vital for the reproduction of life. It also prohibits the dismissal of pregnant and breastfeeding women.

“The recognition of social security for female unpaid domestic workers as well as housewives meant an improvement for working-class women, and this is one of the proposals made by feminist economics. We believe there has been significant progress. As a result, organizations and networks of female unpaid domestic workers have been created. It is very powerful and much appreciated.” (Interview with Ana Acosta and Verónica Calvopiña, El Churo)

Also, the wages of female domestic workers were harmonized with those of other workers; in 2006, they had received only half the wages of a male worker.¹⁰ Their salary rose from US\$120 in 2007 to US\$386 in 2018. Employers were also required to recognize a maximum of 40 hours of work per week and contribute to their social security. Today, about 200,000 women undertake domestic work and 48 per cent of them

8 The previous budget allocated to programmes on violence against women was US\$8,680,000, whereas in the budget memorandum for 2019, which is yet to be approved by the National Assembly, the executive set aside US\$757,000 for these programmes (Ministry of Finance 2018). Currently, violence against women is part of several projects funded by international agencies in agreement with the government.

9 Whereas in 2000 Ecuador ranked tenth in the region in terms of women's participation in legislative arenas, in 2013, with increased women's representation in the National Assembly, it had risen to the third position, behind Cuba and Nicaragua (ECLAC 2018).

10 The role of female domestic workers in Ecuador has traditionally been undervalued: They received only half the salary of other workers, they worked more than 40 hours per week and many were excluded from the social security system or were not entitled to paid annual leave. Therefore, changes in the recognition of their rights are regarded in the country as historic. However, a recent study by CARE INTERNATIONAL (2019) shows that these rights are not respected by employees and the state has done little to enforce their implementation.

are covered by the social security system (National Council for Gender Equality 2018b).

Furthermore, there has been greater visibility in national statistics for women's unpaid work, starting with the 2007 time-use survey and continuing with measuring the contribution of unpaid domestic work to GDP by the National Institute for Statistics and Censuses (INEC) in 2011. The survey results, released in 2014, show that unpaid domestic work represents 10 per cent of Ecuador's GDP, a higher figure than the share of oil revenues.

In terms of unpaid care work for persons living with severe disabilities, the Joaquín Gallegos Lara programme was created in 2010 to establish a monthly non-refundable grant of US\$240 for those who care for such persons. Today, about 18,000 women receive this grant (National Council for Gender Equality 2018b).

However, there is some doubt about future progress in areas relating to the care economy since the government has switched to a neoliberal approach to economic policy:

"If you told me right now that there is a policy being implemented to address the care economy, [I would respond that] it is not being implemented, for the simple reason that in socioeconomic terms this would mean being even more progressive which is completely the opposite of what's happening, that is: labour flexibilization and so on and so forth. I see it more as a more formal move, but really in structural and material terms, I don't see it as a moment when much is being invested in gender equality. I see it more as a nominal thing, especially because the economy is turning in the other direction." (Interview with Elizabeth Vásquez, LGBTQI activist)

Another major advance was the legal classification of labour harassment and the creation of training programmes for workers by the Ministry of Employment (interview with Liliana Durán, Assembly member).

However, existing gaps between women and men in the labour system have not changed in the last decade and reflect the discrimination traditionally experienced by women in this area. In 2007, only 30 per cent of the population in decent work were women compared to 70 per cent of men. This difference remained almost unchanged until 2016, when still only 32 per cent of the population involved in decent work were women and 68 per cent were men (INEC Enemdur 2017b). Despite a slight reduction in the gender wage gap, there are still high levels of discrimination against women: In 2016, women's average monthly salary was 21 per cent less than men's (INEC Enemdur 2017b).

Finally, there is consensus regarding the limited progress in agricultural production from a gender equality perspective as well as in the relationship between gender and environmental issues. Critics refer to both government inaction and the lack of discussion within the women's movement itself in these areas.

"The specific issue of gender and the environment is one of the concerns that has not been developed enough, and I don't mean by the state or even by civil society, but I think that the women's movement should have at least four or five people who have reflected on this, made important contributions. But I feel that this has not yet been incorporated as a specific subject into regulations or public policies, so these are precisely the connections that remain unresolved." (Interview with Lola Valladares, UNFPA)

Sexual and reproductive rights

A review of sexual and reproductive health indicators in Ecuador shows that there has been significant progress in childbirth attended by skilled health personnel,¹¹ some progress in reducing the maternal mortality ratio,¹² for which the target of the MDGs

11 In 2016, this indicator was 97 per cent (INEC 2017c).

12 The maternal mortality rate fell from 50.7 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2007 to 39.7 in 2016 (INEC 2017c).

was not met, setbacks in teenage pregnancy¹³ and no progress in the legalization of abortion.

Although the 1998 Constitution put an end to Ecuador's secular status, this was overturned in 2008, with the new Constitution now making it the supreme duty of the state to guarantee "secular ethics as the basis for public service and the legal regulatory system" (article 3(4)). This move has a "direct impact on the reproductive and sexual rights of women and LGBTQI persons" (interview with Soledad Puente, CNIG expert).

In terms of sexual diversity, the 2008 Constitution recognizes several family types and same-sex civil unions. Furthermore, for the first time, sexual rights are separated from reproductive rights through the recognition of their autonomous roles. Similarly, public health is established with a gender focus and the state must provide sexual and reproductive health services.

There is a long tradition of work carried out by CSOs in relation to sexual and reproductive rights. In 1997, five NGOs began to provide emergency contraception as part of their health services. In 1998, a group of NGOs succeeded in including such contraception in sexual and reproductive health regulations and, that same year, the Law on Free Maternal and Infant Care was passed (Martin 2004; Varea 2015).

13 Data from ECLAC (2017) show that Ecuador had the sharpest rise in teenage pregnancy (25 per cent) in Latin America in the period from 1990 to 2010. It has the highest percentage of teenage pregnancy in South America, with 17 per cent of women aged 15-19 years having delivered a child, and the fourth highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (behind Dominican Republic, Honduras and Nicaragua). More recent national data are even more alarming: According to the National Health and Nutrition Survey conducted in 2012, 18.3 per cent of women aged 15-19 years have given birth. This amounts to a 38 per cent rise in cases reported by the survey between 2004 and 2012 (MSP 2017). It is also important to note that these figures do not include cases of pregnancy in girls aged 10-14 years who, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA 2013), are most vulnerable and at the greatest risk of dying or suffering complications due to pregnancy and childbirth. Data from the Ministry of Public Health show that 8 in every 10 pregnancies in girls younger than 14 years are due to rape by adults who, in 90 per cent of cases, are members of their own families (MSP 2017).

One of the main obstacles to implementing policies on access to contraception has been the opposition of the Catholic Church and groups opposed to the 'gender ideology', whose presence has increased across the continent. In the case of emergency contraception, these groups have used all their power to stop access to this being included in national health regulations and policies, seeing it as a method of abortion (Martin, 2004). Nevertheless, between 1979 and 2012, there was a sharp rise in the use of contraception in the country, from 34 per cent to 80 per cent (National Council for Gender Equality 2018a).

The Correa government passed the National Sex Education Plan, which institutionalized sexual education in the national education system. It also introduced the National Plan to Accelerate the Reduction of Maternal and Neonatal Mortality and the National Public Health Strategy for HIV/AIDS and STIs, which sought to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS- and STIs-related mortality (SENPLADES 2013). In 2016, the Ministry of Public Health created the *Health-Care Manual for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Persons*, which was aimed at reducing gaps in access to health-care services and avoiding discrimination and violence in health care, as well as a clinical practice guide for the termination of pregnancy. In 2018, during the Moreno administration, the *Comprehensive Care Manual for Sexual and Reproductive Health* was issued for persons living with disabilities.

Despite the existence of a large number of plans and regulations, public policies on sexual and reproductive rights during the last decade have been contradictory. In 2012, the National Intersectoral Strategy for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy and Family Planning (ENIPLA) was implemented with the goal of improving access to "information, education, counselling, inclusion, protection and health services for free and responsible decision-making on sexuality and reproduction" (MCDS 2011, p. 38). The strategy was designed with the significant participation of CSOs and the support of the UN system.

"So we all had our say. Ximena Abarca called me, they called me from UNFPA, there were the gays, indigenous people, everyone came for ENIPLA,

UNFPA brought people from Uruguay, PAHO brought experts, and finally a proposal was made, which broke the rules, yes, and was game-changing because one of its priorities was to change sociocultural models, work on sexuality, work on access to contraception. ENIPLA, curiously enough, appointed a team of young women who were not doctors but renowned feminists.” (Interview with Virginia Gómez, sexual and reproductive rights activist)

Despite achieving good results,¹⁴ the strategy was repealed by the President in 2014 using the argument that it was ‘trivializing’ teenage sexuality with campaigns that promoted the use of contraception for pleasure and that pro-abortion and gay groups were interfering with its implementation. It was replaced with a National Family Strengthening Plan that, unlike ENIPLA, did not seek to reduce teenage pregnancy and did not provide for the strengthening of sexual and reproductive health services or capacity-building and public awareness campaigns on sexual and reproductive rights; rather, it proposed to strengthen the family as the basic unit for fostering values and affectivity among teenagers (Presidency of the Republic of Ecuador 2015). The outcome of this policy was a sharp rise in teenage pregnancies between 2014 and 2016.¹⁵

The implementation of the Family Plan opened up a gap between feminist organizations and the government:

“The replacement of ENIPLA with the Family Plan was ‘inconceivable’ for us; in other words a setback, a U-turn, really it was awful. So obviously this led to, let’s say, this hardened the right wing, it hardened their rhetoric and meddling in schools, colleges and also in the whole work

of the Assembly on various issues we were then handling.” (Interview with Lizi Ernst, Coalición Nacional de Mujeres del Ecuador)

The adoption of the Family Plan also led to the government distancing itself from some of the UN agencies dealing with gender equality issues:

“The relationship became quite complicated, the relationship with the UN system, particularly with the agency I work for. It reached a moment where the state didn’t exactly have a human rights mindset, especially in terms of sexual and reproductive rights, the policy switched to a much more conservative position. The Family Plan was adopted, led by someone directly linked with Opus Dei conservative groups. The state also put this person in charge of the Family Plan to act as Ecuador’s representative in all international forums relating to sexual rights, reproductive rights, violence, teenage and youth rights, and so this was a difficult time.” (Interview with Lola Valladares, UNFPA).

However, some interviewees referred to resistance within the state to implement the Family Plan, especially by the Coordinating Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Public Health, since the latter continued to offer the services it had provided previously.

“The Ministry did not yield, did not change the character of the services it offered, did not change the regulations; there was a backwards attitude to rights that was driven by President Correa but the Ministry resisted this policy.” (Interview with Cecilia Falconí, Ministry of Public Health adviser).

“The Ministry of Health said: well, this is how it is, but we’ll continue to carry out our role, we’ll continue to oversee health policies in this country, and we’re also in charge of sexual and reproductive health policies, and it continued to provide sexual and reproductive health services, continued to provide methods of contraception, family planning. And the Population Fund

14 Between 2012 and 2013, the birth rate among teenage mothers aged 15-19 years dropped from 83.97 to 72.93 births per 1,000 mothers, and for those aged 10-14 years from 3.08 to 2.51 births per 1,000 (INEC 2017c). [see next FN]

15 Between 2013 and 2015, the birth rate among teenage mothers aged 15-19 years increased from 72.93 per 1,000 mothers to 76.50, and among those aged 10-14 years from 2.51 per 1,000 to 3.05 (INEC 2017c).

continued to provide technical assistance and, let's say, a number of public policy instruments were successfully adopted within the Ministry, such as, for example, technical standards for child-birth that were culturally acceptable, technical standards for family planning, a technical standard on gender-based violence within the health system, and then last year even the National Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health was adopted.” (Interview with Lola Valladares, UNFPA)

The final working report on the Family Plan noted the resistance in the public sector when implementing the ‘family focus’ in various policies relating to teenage pregnancy:

[Due to] the obstacles and initial opposition we faced, due to the ideological prejudices of many of the main authorities in the executive ministries, we couldn't achieve fluid, proactive and collaborative work in response to this presidential mandate in attaining the best outputs and results. The initial attitude of the three ministries was to delay, send and return documents, which ultimately deferred the incorporation of the family focus.” (National Family Strengthening Plan 2017, p. 37)

This resistance was not seen in the Ministry of Education, however, which, in the context of the Family Plan, removed the sexual education subject from the basic overall education curriculum. This subject has not yet been reestablished.

“We had achieved a lot of progress before the Family Plan, even the drafting of the comprehensive sexual education module for teachers that began to be taught, but then the Family Plan came along and put an end to all that. I believe that now, obviously, with the rise in sexual violence in the field of education, there's significant interest, and in fact, the Ministry of Education has urged us to work hard on comprehensive sexual education. It seems to me that there's significant political will. I believe that in the short term it's possible to implement it, but until now it continues to be a major unresolved matter.” (Interview with Lola Valladares, UNFPA)

Cooperation with the Ministry of Education is recognized in the report on the activities connected with the Family Plan:

“One of the main achievements of the National Family Strengthening Plan was its contribution to reviewing the curriculum map. In June 2015, the Plan reviewed all the books used by the Ministry of Education to train students in various subjects and found serious differences with what occurs in education in terms of affectivity and sexuality, with a family focus. In this sense, it offered a broad and convincing proposal of ‘amendments’. In response to that, the Ministry of Education proposed that, in the building of a curriculum map, the Plan support the same one that currently includes the family focus in relation to learning about affectivity and sexuality in the curriculum for social sciences and natural sciences.” (National Family Strengthening Plan 2017, p. 40)

After the Family Plan was abolished in 2017, the current policy of the Ministry of Education has been to strengthen sexual education content, but not necessarily with a specific subject:

“I wouldn't be worried about the absence of a subject on sexuality, but what we need to review is whether the content in any way deals with and allows girls and boys to address these matters to the extent that is necessary, which is a topic widely discussed in the current world. So, the subject has not been resumed but the content definitely has. What we are saying is that we want to work more on educational innovation than on reforms to the curriculum.” (Interview with Álvaro Sáenz, Deputy Minister of Education)

In 2017, before the end of President Correa's term, the Ministry of Public Health approved the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan 2017-2021. This contained proposals from women's and sexual diversity organizations to address sexuality in a comprehensive way and move beyond programmes based on maternal and infant health and care, which had led to large equality gaps (MSP 2017).

In 2017, one of the first actions by the President Moreno was to abolish the Family Plan. In 2018, the National Intersectoral Policy for the Prevention of Girls and Teenage Pregnancy 2018-2025 was established. This policy includes actions for the promotion, prevention, care, protection and reestablishment of rights for these young people. It is still too early to assess its effectiveness, but we welcome the recognition of teenage pregnancy as a social and public health problem and a human rights violation (MSP et al. 2018).

Regarding actions within the education system, one feature that has come to light in the last two years concerns allegations of sexual harassment and abuse in education facilities. Clear policies and actions have been designed to make it easier for those affected to bring charges and facilitate the allegations' consideration by the District Attorney's Office. Preventive policies have also been developed through communication campaigns run with UN support, and work has begun to restore rights to sexual abuse victims and establish inter-institutional policies coordinated by the justice department, the District Attorney's Office and various sectoral ministries. Finally, the way has been opened for the participation of CSOs that can contribute positive experiences in this area (interview with Álvaro Sáenz, Deputy Minister of Education).

As part of the discussion on sexual and reproductive rights, abortion deserves special attention due to the importance it has had in the public debate in recent years. As mentioned in the previous section, during the years immediately prior to the 2008 Constituent Assembly, young women organized around Casa Feminista Rosa to demand the decriminalization of abortion as an issue linked to the country's structural problems. Although in the last constitutional debate it was not possible to expand the grounds for legal abortion, there has been a series of strategic alliances over the past few years between women's and sexual diversity groups that have brought abortion back into the public debate, resulting in demonstrations for and against it (Varea 2015).

In those years, civil society set up a telephone counselling line called 'safe abortion':

"It was the first service to offer abortion, it was the first feminist space where we could carry out abortions free of charge, or where women paid the amount they could. And this was a really important learning experience for us, because we understood what it meant for a woman to need an abortion and not be able to get one. We didn't want to go on, though, because now there are other spaces. You have to know that there are networks in this country that illegally offer these services, clandestine but safe networks. There is a network that has been operating for 25 years, a safe network, very technical, it's not a feminist network, but which provides these services." (Interview with Virginia Gómez, sexual and reproductive rights activist)

The enormous pressure exercised by conservative voices in the Constituent Assembly led to the approval of article 45 of the constitutional text, which states: "The State shall recognize and guarantee life, including care and protection from conception". This text has become a tool to uphold fundamentalist viewpoints in the country (interview with Soledad Puente, CNIG expert).

The debate on voluntary termination of pregnancy was reopened in 2014 with the approval of the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code (COIP), but the provision of the 1971 Criminal Code on this subject did not change. The COIP punishes women with six months to two years' imprisonment if they undergo an abortion and punishes those who carry out the abortion with one to three years' imprisonment (article 147). Abortions undertaken "to avoid danger to the life or health of the pregnant woman, provided that they cannot be avoided by other means", are exempt, as well as when "the pregnancy is the result of rape to a woman suffering from a mental condition" (article 150). The pivotal debate on the issue included disciplinary measures by the governing party for three of its female assembly members who supported the legalization of abortion in cases of rape. This can be seen as a setback in this matter since. Although the regulation remained unchanged, it became applicable following approval of the COIP. Although abortion has been sanctioned as an illegal practice in Ecuador since it became an independent country in 1830, it is only in

the last five years that women have been prosecuted for undergoing this practice. Women's organizations have been very active in denouncing the criminalization of abortion as an urgent issue in the country's gender equality agenda.

Data published by the State Attorney's Office show that 243 women were prosecuted between 2013 and 2017 for undergoing an abortion, and 192 of these cases occurred after the approval of the COIP (Zaragocín et al. 2018). In 90 per cent of cases, the women were reported by the doctors who treated them (Reyes and Ortiz 2017).

"Even though abortion had always been criminalized, in 2013, for the first time they began to prosecute women who had undergone abortions, who were also the poorest. If you look at the statistics, of the 110 women punished for abortions, all are poor and young, and many are of African descent." (Interview with Ana Acosta and Verónica Calvopiña, El Churo)

The study by Zaragocín et al. (2018) on the criminalization of abortion in Ecuador gathered data published by INEC on 49,515 abortions in 2015 and 2016. According to Ortiz-Prado (2017), there were a further 366,748 cases of other types of abortion (non-spontaneous and non-medically justified abortions—i.e., potentially liable for prosecution) between 2004 and 2017. Varea's (2015) study on abortion in the country presents the following data:

"With regard to cases of maternal mortality due to abortion, 60 per cent of the abortions were spontaneous and 23 per cent were induced; 34 per cent were carried out in an institution, and 54 per cent were conducted in unsafe places. Deaths could have been avoided in 83 per cent of cases, and in 79 per cent of instances, the abortion was the direct cause of death; first delays are frequent; i.e., the inability to reach a public institution; and 9 per cent of cases were associated with some form of violence." (p. 70)

The various voices heard during this study agreed that decriminalizing abortion is the major unresolved matter in sexual and reproductive health policies in Ecuador:

"From my point of view, the issue of abortion is a debt of democracy, as it's young women who have to push for progress in the decriminalization and legalization of abortion, but there's still resistance in the women's movement, we're still a very conservative society, and although the women's movement has advanced a great deal in accepting that it should at least be decriminalized in the case of rape, full legalization is still a utopia, I think." (Interview with Virginia Gómez, sexual and reproductive rights activist)

"When we start to discuss issues such as the decriminalization of abortion, I think there are still factors that clash with politics and society, because of conservative attitudes, because of interference, because of the role that churches still play. We say that some are more flexible than others, but I think that these factors are lacking." (Interview with Andrés Mideros, former National Secretary of Planning)

In July 2018, the women's movement submitted a proposal for reform of the COIP to the National Assembly, calling for the decriminalization of abortion in cases of rape, and this is currently being discussed by the Justice Commission.

On the other hand, LGBTQI rights activists believe that, even though the 2008 Constitution recognizes free sexual choice, sexual and reproductive health policies in the country have adopted a heterosexual approach. This has emphasized maternal health, ignoring issues of sexual diversity (interview with Elizabeth Vásquez, LGBTQI activist).

Although marriage and the adoption of minors by same-sex couples are explicitly banned under Ecuadorian laws, two recent cases opened the way for this issue. The first was when the Constitutional Court issued a ruling in May 2018 that recognized the right of a six-year-old girl to use the surnames of her two lesbian mothers, following legal proceedings that lasted more than four years, with support from the District Attorney's Office. The second case was in July 2018, when a judge in Cuenca ordered the civil registrar to record the marriages of two same-sex couples to whom he had denied this right.

In 2016, the Organic Law on the Management of Identity and Civil Data was passed, establishing the possibility for people, from the age of majority, to replace the 'sex' field on their identity cards with 'gender'. The law also allowed for a change of names. LGBTQI organizations proposed that all identity documents have a 'gender' field, which was not accepted in the legislative debate. These provisions were deemed discriminatory by LGBTQI activists:

"With a pro-trans facade, which is that we do allow a sex change, we go back to the 'male/female' binarism, and what happens to people who see themselves as neither male nor female? What happens to people who want to affirm their gender? What happens with the life-long feminist struggle: remove your rosaries from our ovaries, remove the sex from our cards? These gay sectors that have a greater voice now want to return to binarism and celebrate a bit of assimilationism; gay pride is often the celebration of this gay wish for normality and the return to putting gays in the capitalist system and in the world, when really I believe that a transfeminist position is a bit 'resistant' to this model. We're talking about other genders, we're talking about other bodies, we're talking about other families." (Interview with Elizabeth Vásquez, LGBTQI activist)

Violence against women

A number of new laws on violence against women have been passed in Ecuador in the last two decades. In 1995, the first Law on Violence against Women and the Family was passed, which created Women and Family Police Stations. In 1998, the Ministry of Public Health recognized violence against women as a public health problem. That same year, the criminal definitions of rape, aggravated rape, sexual harassment and procuring, among others, were amended in the Criminal Code (Aecid 2011). In 2009, the Code of Democracy imposed a ban on candidates who had committed gender-based violence. In 2011, units were created to prosecute cases of violence against women and family violence. In 2013, the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code (COIP) classified femicide as a crime (Valle 2018). Under this Code, several forms of violence against women that had previously been

considered as contraventions (physical, psychological and sexual violence) were classified as crimes. The definition of all forms of violence against women as crimes was criticized by a number of women's organizations. They argued that the provisions made it extremely difficult for women who report being victims of violence to receive protection, since they had to go through a long legal process to achieve a sentence, which largely discouraged women from denouncing their aggressors.

The previous government made combating violence against women its main gender equality policy. From 2007 onwards, it designed a Plan to Eradicate Gender-Based Violence (PEVCM), which included four areas for action: the transformation of socio-cultural patterns, which involved two communication campaigns aimed at making violence against women socially unacceptable; the construction of a comprehensive protection system, which called for coordination among various ministries, as well as the provision of support for CSOs, to maintain care services for victims of violence; the reinforcement of access to justice, by appointing judges specialized in cases of violence against women and intra-family violence, as well as district attorneys specialized in gender-based violence; and the strengthening of systems to collect and produce information on this issue, with the National Institute for Statistics and Censuses (INEC) carrying out the first national survey of family relations and gender-based violence against women in 2011. In 2009, a fifth area was added: strengthening institutions (interview with Miriam Alcívar, former PEVCM official).

Although there is a consensus among women's organizations regarding the importance of the 'Ecuador reacts: *machismo* is violence' campaign in preventing violence and support for the survey on violence in the fight for gender equality, the assessment of the results of the PEVCM is negative:

"We had high hopes in 2007, when the plan was created, with its four, and then five priorities, that it would turn what we wanted into a reality. And in fact, the structure of the plan was well designed, but the problem was its implementation. There was no budget or any chance for civil society to

take part in discussing the plan. It was closed, it was completely institutional, state-driven, so it slowly drifted off course. The Ministry of Health did one thing, the Ministry of Education another, but there was no coordination and there was no leadership that could properly address questions or establish budgets that had, let's say, the same objective. In the end, it didn't work.” (Interview with Lizi Ernst, Coalición Nacional de Mujeres del Ecuador)

The Plan had serious institutionalization and implementation problems: It passed from one ministry to another, the budget was insufficient and several of its goals—such as building a comprehensive protection system and a single data registration system—were not met. One positive aspect is that gender-based violence is a clearer problem for society than it was 10 years ago, and in particular it is no longer something that the state can avoid since it has been established as an urgent public policy issue in several state institutions (interview with Miriam Alcívar, former PEVCM officer).

During the Moreno government, the Plan was resumed and became a key part of the National Development Plan 2017-2021 (SENPLADES 2017b). The National Development Plan also addresses femicide as a specific problem and includes a goal for its reduction.

In 2018, the Comprehensive Organic Law on the Prevention and Eradication of Gender-based Violence against Women and its corresponding regulation were passed, which included many of the proposals made by women's and sexual diversity organizations in this regard. The Law created the National Comprehensive System to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women, which was intended to not only prevent violence but also provide assistance and redress to victims. In terms of our discussion on how global and national agendas may intersect, it is interesting to note that the country's shadow report to the CEDAW Committee in 2014 already highlighted the importance of fighting for new, more comprehensive legislation on gender-based violence.

Again, during the discussions of the Law in October 2017, conservative groups organized marches in various cities in Ecuador calling for the removal of

the word 'gender' from the draft, which they saw as a reference to sexual diversity. This triggered a debate within both the Assembly and women's and LGBTQI organizations that ended with the word 'gender' being replaced with the term 'diversity of women'.

“I understood it to be a political agreement on the basis of my reading of the national context in which the law was debated. As you know, [there were] conservative, fundamentalist sectors strongly opposed to this law [...], claiming that it legalized abortion per se, that the law sought to teach children in schools and colleges to be homosexual or transgender, or whatever else they said. In this context it was agreed that, so as not to completely drop the law, it would be a law on violence against the diversity of women.” (Interview with Soledad Puente, CNIG expert)

Defenders of the rights of the LGBTQI population were unhappy with the final text of the law.

“What they committed to do was to include in the draft law a temporary provision stating that after the law was passed, the Assembly would agree to pass a law to promote LGBTQI rights, which never happened; they passed it, but it was worthless, wasn't it? This was... it was tough, tough!” (Interview with Paola Mera, CNIG Technical Secretary)

Again, behind these differences there was the interference of conservative anti-rights groups that opposed rights for the LGBTQI population:

“I succeeded in including transvesticide and transicide as specific categories of murder in the [draft] law, but pro-life supporters went out to march against the LGBTQI community and so on, because it was against us, because it wasn't against feminists, it wasn't against the government, it was against us, so the Assembly got scared and ended up removing transvesticide and transicide, and what was left was a law that practically only concerned women, and only heterosexual women.” (Interview with Diane Rodríguez, LGBTQI activist)

Conservative groups also interfered with the legal regulation that required the Ministry of Education to update its curriculum maps, school texts and teaching guides to make the gender approach a cross-cutting subject (Presidency of the Republic 2018, p. 29). This provision triggered protests by conservative groups opposed to the 'gender ideology', with the organization of a new march under the slogan 'Hands off my kids' in July 2018. Faced with such opposition, the government revised the regulation and removed the terms 'gender approach' and 'new forms of masculinity' from the text (Presidency of the Republic 2018a, p. 2).

Women's organizations and public officials have become increasingly aware of the power that these conservative groups have to hamper gender equality policies in the fields of education and health, and they denounce the deceitful methods they use to distort and manipulate information.

"I've noticed that from Mexico to Argentina, one of the policies they attack the most is education, and the purpose of the attack on education policy is to say that the texts, or the content of texts that talk about sexuality, promote homosexuality or things they consider to be perversions [...], and they do so, curiously, not by quoting texts from the country but from other places, they use texts from Panama or other places, and mount international campaigns." (Interview with Álvaro Sáenz, Deputy Minister of Education)

For women's organizations, one of the most important future challenges for the movement is to turn the law on eradicating violence against women into reality—something that is now significantly restricted by cuts in public expenditure and the abolition of the Ministry of Justice:

"It all remains 'on paper'. It's supposed to have come out of the Ministry of Finance and there was a small part that said: there's no budget impact. How can there be 'no budget impact'? This term really makes my hair stand on end, because I say: if it has no budget impact, does that mean that the Ministry of Finance will not allocate funds to implement it, set up councils, create support

centres, shelters? Welcome centres are now really in an awful condition." (Interview with Lizi Ernst, Coalición Nacional de Mujeres del Ecuador)

Some female public officials have also expressed their doubt about securing funds for the Law.

"The big fight we're having to apply to the Law concerns the budget: How do I get the necessary political will in the midst of a fiscal crisis? It's very difficult. On the one hand, it's a budget problem, and on the other, the problem is the state capacity." (interview with Rocío Rosero, former Deputy Minister of Economic and Social Inclusion)

This all takes place in the worrying context of violence against women. According to data from the national survey of family relations and gender-based violence against women, conducted by INEC in 2011, 60 per cent of women have experienced some form of violence and 25 per cent have suffered sexual violence at some point in their lives (INEC 2011); there has also been increases in cases of sex crimes against girls, boys and adolescents,¹⁶ femicide¹⁷ and trafficking in persons.¹⁸

In addition to changing cultural patterns, the interviewees pointed to three further challenges: the link between sexual and reproductive rights and violence, especially teenage pregnancy among girls under 15 years, which in most cases is the result of rape by family members or friends close to the victim's family; violence against LGBTQI persons; and gender-based violence in emergency situations, an issue that has barely been discussed in Ecuador but that proved to be extremely relevant during the 2015 earthquake.

16 During the 2015-2017 period, the Judiciary Council recorded 1,862 judicial cases of sex crimes against girls, boys and adolescents, of which 44 per cent resulted in conviction, 14 per cent in acquittal and 42 per cent in other verdicts (Judiciary Council 2017).

17 The femicide rate rose from 55 women per 100,000 in 2015 to 97 women per 100,000 in the first half of 2017 (Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Worship 2017).

18 Between 2012 and 2016, the National Special Police Unit for Children and Youth (DINAPEN) and the Judicial Police rescued 332 people who were victims of trafficking. Of these, 82 per cent were victims of sexual exploitation and 11 per cent of labour exploitation (DINAPEN and Judicial Police 2017).

4.

PROCESSES TO LOCALIZE AND ADAPT THE 2030 AGENDA TO THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

4.1.

The relationship between Ecuador and the United Nations

During Correa's government, significant changes were made to the relationship between the state and international organizations based on the process of restoring and strengthening the state and national planning.¹⁹ From 2007 to 2017, the assumption had been that international cooperation should contribute to the national goals being established in the various national development plans during this period, "without countering or contradicting international agreements that, on the contrary, were respected" (interview with Magdalena León, gender and economics activist).

"I believe that in the last 10 years, since 2007, one of the major achievements of the Ecuadorian state was to recover planning, and through planning being able to align a development plan with national goals for all public action [...], and I believe that it has been possible to shift cooperation so that it doesn't only address its own agendas, but adds to the national development agenda set up in the national plan with a constitutional mandate. And I believe that this has made it possible to better coordinate international cooperation with public policy." (Interview with Andrés Mideros, former National Secretary of Planning)

"Before, they imposed things on you, and I believe that recently, during this decade, although sometimes things were a little tense, they were successful in the end since, I don't know if the word is respect, but what happened is that it's one thing to cooperate with a State that is completely absent and weak and that would rather have everyone doing things for it, and another thing is to cooperate with a strong State that assumes some of the debt it had." (Interview with Miriam Alcívar, former PEVCM official)

Regarding the relationship with United Nations agencies, the first three national plans (2007, 2009 and 2013) during President Correa's period in office included the MDGs. The latest plan (2017-2021) by the government of President Moreno is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

¹⁹ During the 1996-2006 period, no national development plans were designed and national planning was weakened in the context of a general policy of state cutbacks.

The Correa government believed that constitutional principles in Ecuador, which were part of the national planning process, such as the National Good Living Plan (2013-2017), exceeded the scope of the MDGs. The goals were considered an important reference point; they were not ambitious goals for the country, but rather minimum standards to be reached. In this regard, the Good Living Plan states:

“Our National Good Living Plan goes beyond the goals set by the United Nations in the Millennium Development Goals.... It is important to emphasize that Ecuador has exceeded this global organization’s own expectations, since it has always aspired to go beyond the ‘minimum goals’ and has set out, with determination, its own ‘social maximum goals’ to drive irreversible, rapid, profound and radical changes in the country.” (SENPLADES 2013b, p. 18)

Notwithstanding these considerations, the country measured and assessed its achievement of the MDGs by submitting periodic reports to the United Nations.

“It’s very funny because President Correa came along saying that the MDGs were not too much, that they were a baseline, that Ecuador was above it, that it was good for Africa, but we ended up with SENPLADES fully committed to assessing the value of the MDGs in a sort of international beauty contest to see who was complying and who wasn’t, in which SENPLADES monitored social sector ministries by demanding explanations as to why they had or had not met certain key goals on which they had all the influence in the world.” (Interview with Cecilia Falconí, Ministry of Public Health adviser)

During the Correa Presidency, it was possible to distinguish between two periods in the country’s relationship with the United Nations. The first was from 2007 to 2012, when the relationship was more fluid and there was greater openness to cooperation in a number of areas. In the second period, from 2013 to 2017, relations became more tense after the government’s decision that all international

cooperation should focus on the goal of changing the country’s production model. United Nations agencies saw this proposal as a threat to its continued role in the country.

“The government told us that its priority at that time was changing the production model and technological issues, so the cooperation agencies that agreed to this framework were welcome, and those who didn’t could leave. However, because the United Nations is what it is, the government thought it should stay because, although it didn’t have many resources, it could provide technical assistance, so it was a difficult time.” (Interview with Lola Valladares, UNFPA)

“At the beginning, there was confusion, not knowing how to answer such a demand. I believe the system did not yet have effective answers to these issues. So you were asking them to assist you with something that, in actual fact, the system did not have better tools to do it. Gradually they started to come to terms with the idea and we said: well, we need to build capacities in the fields of science and technology, because education is an important driver of change for the production model. But I believe that we posed a significant challenge to them and I hope that they don’t abandon these issues, because they also learned to develop other skills that are vital for countries.” (Interview with Marisela Rivera, former International Relations Coordinator, SENPLADES)

The current Secretary of the National Council for Gender Equality (CNIG), who at the time worked at the International Cooperation Secretariat (SETECI), also remembered that this focus marked the end of cooperation in gender equality since it was difficult to adapt to the state requests.

However, as mentioned above, the state is not homogeneous, and actors in favour of gender equality exist alongside those opposed to it. Therefore, despite these tensions, important alliances were built with some ministerial authorities:

“The state is not a single unit, but there are in fact other political desires that are highly relevant, just like with SENPLADES at the time, and the Population Fund was able to build an important alliance, which in 2012 led to the adoption in Ecuador of the change from the ECLAC Population and Development Committee to the Regional Conference on Population and Development. In fact, Ecuador hosts and leads this regional conference, and after that, the Montevideo Consensus was later adopted in Uruguay, which is the most advanced regional instrument in the world. So I believe that we can talk about individual political wills, or rather we have to recognize the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Patiño as Minister, accompanied by his colleague Miriam Alcívar, who was fully committed to women’s rights in an open way that allowed, for example, the Uruguayan conference delegation to also include representatives from CSOs and women’s and youth organizations. This did not happen again after this first conference in Montevideo; civil society was no longer able to participate in this arena.” (Interview with Lola Valladares, UNFPA)

Moreover, the United Nations helped to draft the national development plans during this period and Ecuador made its contribution to the process leading to the SDGs: “Ecuador played a very active role in this process, so that later it was one of the pilot countries to achieve a little more” (interview with Nydia Pesántez, UN Women country officer).

4.2.

Ecuador and the 2030 Agenda

Ecuador explicitly announced its intention to work with the SDGs. First, the National Assembly, through its Resolution of 20 July 2017, adopted the 2030 Agenda as a mandatory reference for its work and urged the executive to coordinate actions to achieve the SDGs and submit periodic progress reports to the Assembly; it also agreed to develop mechanisms to assess legislative actions in accordance with the SDGs (National Assembly 2017a).

Subsequently, in 2018, President Moreno passed Executive Decree No. 371, which stated that “the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was the National Government’s public policy” (Presidency of the Republic of Ecuador 2018b, article 1). It made the National Secretariat for Planning and Development (SENPLADES) responsible for aligning national planning with the SDGs, regulating, monitoring and evaluating the 2030 Agenda and drafting and submitting the progress report on the SDGs to the National Planning Council (Presidency of the Republic of Ecuador 2018b, article 3). Also in 2018, SENPLADES issued a technical regulation in July to monitor and evaluate the SDGs that established priorities for the 2030 Agenda in the context of the National Development Plan goals, targets and indicators (SENPLADES 2018a).

UN staff have a positive opinion on the importance of the SDGs in national planning and the greater openness of public bodies to work with their agencies (interview with Lola Valladares, UNFPA).

After the 2030 Agenda was adopted in 2015, INEC “led regional efforts to establish goals and targets [...], which was undoubtedly a major role” (interview with Andrés Mideros, former National Secretary of Planning). INEC classified the indicators for the periodic report and identified those that were not available in the current national statistics system. On this basis, it created the Statistical Development Plan to report on the SDGs, the first edition of which (INEC 2017c) outlines the country’s current statistical capacity. The second edition (INEC 2018b) elaborates on the strategy to produce the information on the indicators that are not available (Valle 2018).

Forty-seven indicators on gender equality were identified. Sources and methodologies were defined for reporting on 55 per cent of them. For 40.4 per cent, improvements were needed in the sources of information; and sources of information were not available for only 4.3 per cent (Valle 2018). Detailed information can be found in Annex 2.

In relation to SDG 5 to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, only 31 per cent of the

indicators have sources and methodologies for the report, 62 per cent of indicators need better sources of information and 7 per cent have no available sources of information (INEC 2018a).

The Special Commission for Gender Statistics was created in 2015 in order to produce statistics on gender inequalities in Ecuador. It has a work plan (Valle 2018), and all the preparatory work was carried out in order to incorporate the SDGs in the new National Development Plan (Horn and Grugel 2018).

In 2017, with the election of the new President, the National Development Plan for 2017-2021 was approved. The link between national policies and the SDGs is mentioned in various sections of the new Plan and in a series of public interviews with national authorities.

“A lot of work has been carried out on the SDGs, and I’d even say that nowadays the SDGs have more influence than the MDGs had on the previous development plan, the previous three plans; it’s even more visible now. In fact, if we look at the National Development Plan, here is an agenda to achieve the SDGs.” (Interview with Andrés Mideros, former National Secretary of Planning)

The Plan’s first priority is “rights for all, throughout life”. This aim to guarantee a decent life for all people is based on achieving a fairer and more equal society through the promotion of equality in all areas and the eradication of all forms of discrimination, exclusion and poverty. The Plan incorporates a gender approach and uses inclusive language; it recognizes women in their diversity and addresses their specific problems by establishing affirmative actions; and it proposes policies for LGBTQI persons to exercise their rights (SENPLADES, 2017b).

In terms of economic rights, the Plan proposes policies to reinforce the care system and guarantee access to decent work and social security for all. It establishes targets to reduce the gap in decent work between women and men, reduce the wage gap between

women and men and increase the percentage of people covered by contributory social security benefits.

Although the Plan recognizes the right to sexual and reproductive health, it does not specify any policies in this regard, though it does establish targets on reducing maternal and infant mortality, reducing teenage pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy, increasing exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life, increasing assisted childbirth and reducing the transmission of HIV from mother to child (SENPLADES 2017b).

With regard to gender-based violence, the first goal establishes a policy to eradicate all forms of violence, particularly gender-based violence. The Plan also includes targets on eradicating all forms of discrimination and violence, with an emphasis on gender-based violence; reducing the percentage of LGBTQI persons experiencing discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity; and reducing the rate of femicides (SENPLADES 2017b).

Three of the nine targets under SDG 5 are also found in the Plan (SENPLADES 2017a). These are the targets related to violence, discrimination against women and sexual and reproductive rights. However, targets that are not included concern the care economy, early marriage, the participation of women in the public arena, access to productive assets, information technologies and the empowerment of women.

With regard to the targets of SDG 5 that are not included in the Plan, selective adoption processes and a limited interpretation of the 2030 Agenda can be observed. For example, sexual and reproductive health is addressed only from the point of view of maternal and infant health, leaving aside the broader perspective of sexual rights. Even in the context of this already restrictive outlook, the Plan does not consider the universalization of sexual and reproductive health services—as established in the SDGs—but proposes targets to reduce unplanned and teenage pregnancies. However, no target is established to reduce sexual violence even though, according to data from the Ministry of Public Health (2017), 80 per cent

of cases of pregnancy in girls aged 10-14 years are the result of rape.

The only target associated with violence against women in the Plan is related to the reduction of femicide. In terms of human trafficking, the Plan establishes a target relating to the trafficking of girls and boys in the context of the eradication of child labour without addressing the problem of trafficking for sexual purposes. Similarly, in relation to SDG 3, the reduction of HIV is included in the Plan only from the point of view of avoiding mother-to-child transmission and not of reducing the rate of HIV among the population in general and particularly among women. More examples could be listed, but the main point is to see how the targets have been reinterpreted or adapted to the local context, losing the force they have in the 2030 Agenda.

There are no targets or indicators relating to the care system despite it being an important element of the public agenda in recent years as well as of the SDGs. In general, gender equality is barely covered in the Plan whereas the 2030 Agenda has a specific objective on gender equality and makes it a cross-cutting issue of various goals, especially those related to the social sphere.

“There are very few targets concerning gender equality in our National Development Plan, whereas in the SDGs, in Goal 5, there are a lot of targets on gender equality. So I think that, in terms of ‘goals’, they are similar enough, but in terms of ‘targets’, there are gaps that should be addressed within our National Plan.” (Interview with Marisela Rivera, former International Relations Coordinator, SENPLADES)

UN agencies had a greater role in drafting the National Development Plan for 2017-2021 than they had in previous plans, where they played an advisory role:

“We considered it very important that SENPLADES told us to provide our technical assistance, on the one hand, for mainstreaming a human rights-based approach in the new National Development Plan. Along with civil society, SENPLADES and the

Ministry of Public Health, we developed a study on the costs of omitting sexual and reproductive health, and the data that resulted from this study were used as the policy basis for the Plan. [...]. Another area where we put a strong emphasis on technical assistance for the Plan was the achievement of some sort of alignment between the main issues, the SDGs and the proposals of the country, obviously with full respect for their decisions and priorities.” (Interview with Lola Valladares, UNFPA)

The National Agenda for the Equality of Women and LGBTQI People 2018-2021 is a specific planning tool for gender equality adopted in August 2018. The basic contribution of this tool, compared with the previous period, is that it distinguishes between political actions for women and for LGBTQI persons, accounting for the increasing importance of the demands by sexual diversity groups in Ecuador.

Like the National Development Plan, the National Agenda for the Equality of Women and LGBTQI People also refers to the SDGs. Regarding the issues addressed in this study, the National Agenda deals with policies to reduce women’s domestic and care work burden; access to decent work and factors of production for women and LGBTQI persons; the use of labour-saving productive and domestic technologies; women’s and LGBTQI persons’ exercise of their sexual and reproductive rights “respecting their corporality, identity and generic sexual identity” (National Council for Gender Equality 2018a, p. 120); and the eradication of gender-based violence in society and education. In other words, many of the gender issues of the 2030 Agenda that are not included in the National Development Plan are explicitly referred to in the National Agenda for the Equality of Women and LGBTQI People. Nevertheless, equality agendas remain only at a policy level and may or may not be implemented, and it is difficult to monitor and measure their progress:

“There’s a problem here. We can’t reach an agreement with SENPLADES on the equality agendas [...]. According to SENPLADES, there should be no indicators or targets because [...] they think that the agendas help to fulfil the National Development Plan, and that it’s the Plan that has targets and

indicators, and what needs to be measured, so we shouldn't measure the agendas, but it's difficult to know [...] how to measure whether there has been progress or not.” (Interview with Soledad Puente, CNIG expert)

SENPLADES established the first Voluntary National Review (VNR) to monitor the SDGs, which was submitted to the United Nations in July 2018. The drafting of the review had the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country office, the body in charge of promoting dialogue with civil society to review and monitor the SDGs.

The VNR provides an overview of the situation of the country for each of the SDGs. Ecuador reported on only 10 per cent of all indicators in the 2030 Agenda and 27 per cent of all indicators for which the country has information, using the classification established by INEC. Details of this information can be found in Annex 3. Regarding the gender perspective in the VNR, Ecuador reported on 15 per cent of all gender indicators in the 2030 Agenda and 33 per cent of the indicators for which it has information (Tier I). Details can be found in Annex 4.

Since the SENPLADES technical standards stipulate that the SDGs be monitored on the basis of national planning, we analysed the consistency of the targets in the National Development Plan with those of the SDGs and found that 68 per cent of the 149 targets of the Plan are associated with SDG targets. This means that Ecuador should report on all of them, but only 34 per cent of these matching targets were reported, namely 35 of the 102 targets in the National Development Plan that correspond to SDG targets. As regards to gender equality, only 31 per cent of all SDG targets were reported.

Of the issues covered in this study, for economic rights the participation of women in non-decent work was analysed, disaggregated by type of non-decent work. The percentage of women in managerial roles was also examined. However, these indicators were only reported for the year 2017, without a time series. Finally, the reduction in the wage gap between women and men for the period 2014-2017 was also studied.

Regarding sexual and reproductive rights, the VNR reported on maternal mortality and professional attendance at childbirth. Unwanted and teenage pregnancies, which had specific targets in the National Development Plan, were omitted. In terms of violence, the proportion of women who had experienced violence (2011) and the number of femicides (2017) were reported, without any time series.

The study also looked at 15 laws passed by the National Assembly between October 2015 and May 2018 that were linked to the SDGs (SENPLADES 2018b). This accounts for only 28 per cent of the laws passed in the study period that relate to the SDGs.

One of the limitations of the analysis was the lack of disaggregation in the small amount of data presented, which meant that many of the cross-cutting gender indicators (those that do not fall under SDG 5) were not reported on. The lack of disaggregation of indicators by sex, ethnicity, location or disability makes it difficult to assess the existing gaps between social groups or geographic areas in the country and to uphold the promise of the 2030 Agenda to “leave no one behind”.

It is important to note that INEC has a whole section on its website about monitoring the SDGs, and the indicators it reports on far exceed those detailed by the country in its VNR. First, more indicators are reported; second, historical periods of more than three years are presented; and third, disaggregated data are shown to demonstrate the increase or reduction in gaps over time. The report missed the opportunity to make a more thorough examination of the indicators associated with the SDGs despite the existence of political will, standards and required data.

“INEC carried out some very interesting work [...] to identify which of the SDG targets you could measure, which targets you would never be able to measure and which targets you could work with to measure. [...], I see that we've gone astray a bit from this work, which was done during the Correa government. In fact, [...] the country's leadership was recognized [by the

United Nations] because it was the first country [...] that had done a sort of 'scan' of what it was able to measure. If we have a global agreement to measure the SDG indicators and targets, this should have been a very valuable instrument, and it should be reflected in the VNR [...]. The report gives an account more of the policies aligned with the goals than of concrete data on the progress on the targets; so I believe here there was a 'disagreement' between those that were of interest to the system, which is obvious, to know how the implementation of the SDGs is advancing, compared with what the country is reporting." (Interview with Marisela Rivera, former International Relations Coordinator, SENPLADES)

The United Nations was in charge of the participatory process to draw up the VNR. Workshops were held in five cities, with the attendance of 250 actors and contributions from participants to identify progress and challenges relating to Goals 1, 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 17 (SENPLADES 2018b). In addition, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) held consultations with girls, boys and young people. The results of this work were not included in the report but published as an annex. Of the goals analysed, only Goals 1 and 11 related to gender inequalities. The United Nations did not have much participation in compiling the text of the VNR, and the two agencies specialized in gender equality, UN Women and UNFPA, believe that this issue was not addressed in depth:

"I'd say that it was mostly 'in-house', it was an exercise conducted by SENPLADES. From the start we offered our support because it's also our role, it's our mission, and we have methodologies, instruments and things to work on the gender equality aspects and so on. We gave SENPLADES this material, conducted an initial workshop, but then 'the door was closed' and SENPLADES did everything; what we did was to undertake a series of consultations [...] because it's also 'mandatory' for voluntary reports [...] so that was the job they asked us to do." (Interview with Alison Vásconez, UN Women)

"We believe that, in fact, some important issues should also be adopted, maybe in new and more detailed reports, and I refer again to the issues relating to gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights." (Interview with Lola Valladares, UNFPA)

Section 3 of the VNR includes a comprehensive overview of the main policies relating to gender equality adopted by Ecuador. Those policies that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda are: (a) political parity between candidates in popular elections and for collegial bodies that, as seen above, has seen significant progress; (b) policies relating to the care economy, with most progress achieved before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda; (c) policies relating to sexual and reproductive rights, which during the previous administration suffered setbacks but which have now been resumed by the Moreno government; and (d) policies on violence against women, which were introduced at the start of the Moreno government with the approval of the Law on Violence but may now come to a standstill because the budget for their implementation is insufficient and there has not yet been a decision about which institution will coordinate this policy.

The United Nations' approach to sustainable human development has had a major influence on public actions, especially the proposals linked to the National Good Living Plan during the past decade (interview with Alison Vásconez, UN Women). Ecuador has made significant progress towards the SDGs compared with the MDGs. However, as a result of the country's experience in the last 20 years, one relevant issue is absent from the 2030 Agenda, namely international migration:

"I believe that what's missing, and the country has always said this, is the question of human mobility. We have included the environment, we have included gender equality but we still haven't included the issue of human mobility, a battle fought from the South [...]. But I think it's an agenda that's sympathetic to what the world needs right now." (Interview with Andrés Mideros, former National Secretary of Planning)

Other general issues that are not sufficiently visible in the 2030 Agenda, but that were mentioned in the interviews and are crucial to women's lives are: (a) the inclusion of multidimensional approaches to measuring poverty, in which the region and Ecuador have made substantial progress (interview with Andrés Mideros, former National Secretary of Planning) that makes it possible to see existing gaps in the exercise of rights by women and men; and (b) issues relating to population policies, especially in countries that still have a demographic bonus (interview with Lola Valadares, UNFPA).

With regard to gender equality per se, the huge progress made with the SDGs compared with the MDGs in incorporating a specific goal for gender equality and gender mainstreaming efforts has been recognized. However, as shown above, the most contested issues in Ecuador at the moment are those relating to the decriminalization of abortion and to the rights of sexually diverse persons. Unfortunately, the 2030 Agenda omits both. It is therefore important that the National Development Plan 2017-2021 includes the eradication of discrimination against LGBTQI persons as one of its goals, reflecting the increased visibility of this issue in Ecuador in recent years.

Both the United Nations and the government stress that the SDGs are a reference for national planning that establish minimum standards to be achieved:

"We have to start from one fact: international instruments are minimum agreements for States, they are not maximum agreements for States [...]. Global agendas don't set a high standard for us; global agendas establish the floor that countries need to be on because countries, regions, cultures, forms of government are so different [...], and getting them to agree requires minimum, not maximum, benchmarks. So the international legal framework is not our maximum, which shames our humanity; it is our minimum. Not everyone agrees, for example, with even talking about sexual and reproductive rights, so in the international framework we have the minimum levels that

we have to guarantee for women, and if Ecuador doesn't meet these minimum requirements, it's below the minimum standard." (Interview with Nydia Pesántez, UN Women country officer)

"They've been a very important reference [...], but something interesting has happened, which is that in general, Ecuador has reached and exceeded nearly all the goals. It's normal for an international institution to set minimum standards, so we tried to go a bit further, so that's why I say it's an important reference, but we didn't devise our plans according to the SDGs, or to the MDGs earlier, but took them as an important reference. When we had to give an account in the international arena, it was very easy to show that the results of Ecuadorian public policies are consistent and that they're working fairly well in terms of these international rates." (Interview with Álvaro Sáenz, Deputy Minister of Education)

The persons interviewed recognized the impact of the United Nations on issues relating to poverty, health, education and employment. In the field of gender equality, the influence on sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence and economic rights was mentioned. Broad opportunities were seen for the 2030 Agenda to enable progress in these issues in the country. However, there are also difficulties in fiscal planning and the productive economy:

"In my opinion, there is certainly a growing demand for this kind of support nowadays, I think they're listening more, they're asking more things from the United Nations, and I therefore think that our role must be strengthened because now the demands are different from what they were before, and also [...] there's always this gap which we've talked about 'a thousand times': social here, economic there [...]. I think the economic agenda's still very weak; the country is faced with an economy that's very weak, I think. It's a problem, and I think we should reinforce it." (Interview with Alison Vásconez, UN Women)

4.3.

Gender equality organizations and the 2030 Agenda

Long-standing women's organizations have a close relationship with the UN system. The use of international tools has been important for the national advocacy agenda and for the complaints they can bring before international organizations to address the breaking of international instruments by the State. In the interviews, the role of the Beijing Platform for Action was mentioned as a key factor in the process of building national organizations, as well as efforts connected with the ICPD Programme of Action and issues relating to women's work, especially female public officials at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

The criminalization of abortion and the criminalization of social protest were also mentioned as milestones in claims of human rights violations by Ecuador:

"In 2012, Ecuador had to review the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. We had an alternative report and succeeded in getting the Covenant to tell the country to decriminalize abortion because it contravenes standards and goes against its own Constitution." (Interview with Virginia Gómez, sexual and reproductive rights activist)

"I'm from the Saraguro people. We experienced historic criminalization, mostly women, and this was brought [...] before the United Nations. Then we, I and another female colleague who's one of the leaders here in the organization, had a close relationship with the UN. They helped us to spread the word, they helped us to get past obstacles, and they helped us to tell people about this criminalization of women." (Interview with Sisa Contento, Ecuarunari youth leader)

The use of international instruments by long-standing women's organizations has strengthened them and enabled them to legitimize their arguments.

"It's always our best argument because for assembly members and politicians you [...] have more credibility when you speak the language of the United Nations, in the context of the standards for which we have fought for decades." Interview with Rocío Rosero, former Deputy Minister of Economic and Social Integration)

Despite the active participation of established women's organizations in international forums, their voices remain critical of the UN system's alignment with the priorities established by the state, the scarce resources with which they support civil society and the management of existing diversity within the women's movement in Ecuador:

"I think the United Nations and UN Women until now have been following a line very close to the government, which is [...] they had quite 'narrow' margins, let's say for doing their work. In other words, they couldn't act freely, but rather they had to set the public policies and priorities that the state had established [...] even though some, for example, have worked on sexual and reproductive rights, UNFPA has always been working on this, but without much visibility or resources for civil society. That's to say, we've been very badly treated. [...], last year we had a special expedited procedure, we submitted a proposal for US\$8,000 to UN Women and they never replied! But for things that could in some way 'harm' the State, they'd rather not." (Interview with Lizi Ernst, Coalición Nacional de Mujeres del Ecuador)

New feminist organizations, which adopted a public advocacy strategy beyond the state and privilege the struggle in the streets, are critical of their predecessors due to the movement's institutionalization and do not see the relationship with the United Nations as being as important.

"I don't know the 2030 Agenda in depth. I think that [...] it's a specific organizational forum that works on the question [...] of the impact that international agreements, treaties and goals could have at the local level. [But] there's another movement in another sphere, with other ways of organizing, that doesn't take part in these

political lobbying spaces, although they're proposing actions. I believe this is one of the big differences with this new wave, which has another view, at a distance from the state, rather than demanding responsibility, and also the role of youth feminism, which isn't close to institutionality, understood also as the institutionality of UN organizations." (Interview with Ana Acosta and Verónica Calvopiña, El Churo)

"In some arenas, more than feminism, which has been more closely linked to CONAMU, to international mechanisms, shadow reports, CEDAW, for example [...], they've always used international instruments, MDGs and so on. In street activism and transfeminism, this isn't the case. There's no central reference." (Interview with Elizabeth Vásquez, LGBTQI activist)

"It's an Agenda we don't use in the youth feminist movement; we don't use it as a reference for our work." (Interview with Gabriela Gómez, young indigenous feminist)

About half of the organizations interviewed were unaware of the content of the 2030 Agenda. These organizations also have a poor relationship with the United Nations, sometimes because they feel that it does not relate to their interests, sometimes because they have no access to information and sometimes because they feel left out, such as trans groups:

"No, the truth is we don't know the 2030 Agenda. If we had much more direct contact with them, we would know about many of the issues they're working on [...]. The United Nations needs to understand something: they can't only work with groups in Quito. [...], Second, [...] they don't listen or know how some of the issues, some of the ideas, some of the public policies we have in mind work [...]. I've always tried to maintain contact with UN Women and they've always turned me down." (Interview with Diane Rodríguez, LGBTQI activist)

During the past 30 years, indigenous Ecuadorian organizations have strongly questioned the concept of development. Indigenous activists for gender equality

who were interviewed for this study also questioned the 2030 Agenda:

"Are we really working in a structural way, fighting the causes of our various forms of oppression in a structural way? From our point of view, we're suggesting total transformation, a new vision of the world that doesn't mean, for example, sustainable development. For us it's important to ask [...]: what kind of development? And what do we want development to look like? [...] These agendas they give us that talk about development say we're living in backward conditions where there's no development. So, for example, we say, and we've always maintained this: 'We aren't poor, we're impoverished'. What we want is to return to the land, return to working on the land, and we're not poor, but undervalued, and the work we do on the land is not appreciated.

"The state message is that they're carrying out sustainable extraction, sustainable mining, sustainable extractivism. Is that part of it? We don't know, and I'm telling you, I have a basic understanding of the SDGs. [...] For example, how are they working on poverty? By creating more jobs? Where? Here in the city? What does it mean for us rural women when they prioritize work and employment for the city in general, in their economic support and incentives for large companies that are ultimately the ones who give you jobs, this means migration again for us, and for us this means doubling the workload again, so for us it's very important to read these international goals and agendas again. [...] They're from a white/mixed race hegemonic point of view [...], and I think that we have been relegated [...]. My view of the UN is that we still don't have our own legitimate voice and we still feel as if they speak for us." (Interview with Gabriela Gómez, young indigenous feminist)

The various forms of relationship of UN agendas and agencies with women's and sexual diversity organizations in Ecuador are closely linked to the heterogeneity of the gender equality movement in the country, their different experiences, their strategies for action and their different priorities.

5.

CONCLUSIONS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

An analysis of the process of state and gender equality organizations for the localization and integration of the 2030 Agenda into public policies shows that it is a selective process governed by a number of factors. First, it depends on the type of relationship established between the three main actors involved in the localization process: the state, CSOs and international organizations specializing in gender equality. We saw that in the 1990s, the Beijing and Cairo international agendas played an important role in highlighting women's rights and acted as mechanisms for the legitimization of certain demands made by the Ecuadorian women's movement.

This context changed in the new millennium due, first, to the emergence of feminist organizations whose agendas were more autonomous from the state and international organizations and, second, to a state recovery process from 2007 that gave an important role to planning, with the state assuming regulatory and redistributive responsibilities. Both changes came together during the Constituent Assembly, which recognized key rights for women and sexually diverse groups.

Traditional demands by the women's movement regarding political participation and the struggle against gender-based violence were supplemented by demands for sexual, reproductive and economic rights. In this context of state strengthening and the diversification of feminist demands, global agendas adopted gender equality as a target and set minimum standards to be reached (the MDGs and SDGs). Yet both the state and women's organizations disputed the meaning of the gender equality agenda, turning to the global agendas rather tangentially.

Furthermore, between 2007 and 2017 we identified a major shift in the relationship between these

three actors. First, there was an initial alignment of the agendas of three actors—the state, the women's movement and the United Nations—on gender equality issues in Ecuador. This resulted in considerable progress in gender equality policies and programmes related to political participation, economic rights and gender-based violence, along with more limited progress on sexual and reproductive rights. This alignment, with a strong state role, lost momentum in 2013 when the country began to adopt more conservative positions on sexual and reproductive rights, creating significant distance with some sectors of the gender equality movement as well as tensions with UN agencies working on these issues.

Nevertheless, our study shows that the state conservative position was not monolithic, and shifts and gaps emerged that ensured the continuation of certain policies, such as those implemented by the Ministry of Public Health, or the adoption of certain international agendas clearly aligned with the struggle for women's rights, such as the Montevideo Consensus. In these actions we can see the assistance from the United Nations, especially from UNFPA.

Finally, in the last year the relationship between these three actors has taken another form following the election of the new government. Our analysis of the level of adoption of the SDGs in planning systems and interviews with public officials from the state planning agency, SENPLADES, shows a high degree of convergence between the National Development Plan and the SDGs and demonstrates the political will to mainstream the 2030 Agenda in planning tools. Women's organizations have also worked closely with the state through advocacy for certain policies such as those on gender-based violence, the prevention of sexual abuse and the development of strategies to reduce teenage pregnancy. In other words, we may consider ourselves in a situation similar to that experienced at the start of President Correa's government, when the scenario was one of convergence and greater state openness to working with CSOs; this could have a positive effect on the integration of the 2030 Agenda into public policies.

However, we found some weaknesses in this scenario, which could affect the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and which therefore must be taken into account. The structural conditions of the country's economy and the macroeconomic responses the current government has given—focusing on fiscal adjustments, deregulation and trade liberalization—may significantly affect the implementation of a gender equality agenda and social and economic rights in general. Budget cuts in social spending in 2019, as well as the abolition and reduction of state bodies such as the Ministry of Justice and, more recently, the National Secretariat for Planning and Development (SENPLADES), certainly hamper the implementation of gender equality policies and mean an increase in the gap between what is stated in planning tools and plans, such as the recently approved Equal Opportunities Plan for Women and Sexual Diversity, and what is actually implemented. It should be pointed out that this gap between the recognition of rights and the signing of binding international agendas, on the one hand, and what is actually achieved, on the other, has been relatively constant in Ecuador.

The role of women's organizations and other CSOs is therefore essential for demanding rights, and the 2030 Agenda can play an important part in this regard, as other agendas did in the 1990s. It is worth emphasizing that, unlike in the 1990s, women's and LGBTQI organizations are growing stronger in Ecuador, becoming civil actors with advocacy capacities. For this to happen, we must pay attention to one of the study's important findings, which is the lack of knowledge of and interest in the 2030 Agenda among some women's organizations, especially those of young, indigenous and sexually diverse women. The study shows that only the older organizations with greater experience in lobbying and advocacy at the international level are aware of the 2030 Agenda and see it as a guiding tool for action. We therefore think that there should be an adaptation process of the 2030 Agenda to the demands of younger, more diverse groups, as well as a coordination of proposals from the global to the local level and vice versa.

Another factor we have taken into account in this analysis is the country's technical capacity to align its indicators and policies with the principles of the 2030 Agenda. The findings demonstrate that, while there is substantial capacity for planning, creating indicators and producing statistical information, this capacity is underused and there is little correspondence between state rhetoric on the importance of the 2030 Agenda and its use as an instrument to monitor public policies. Work should therefore be carried out with various state sectors to improve the use of these resources, which facilitate policy monitoring and, if adopted by civil society, can become major advocacy mechanisms. The experience of Colectivo Feminista de Geografía Crítica, which created maps and indicators on the criminalization of abortion in Ecuador in 2018,²⁰ and the study on the costs of neglecting sexual and reproductive health in the country conducted jointly by a CSO (Sendas), UNFPA, the Ministry of Public Health and SENPLADES, are examples of the strategic use of statistics to highlight the importance of women's rights.

20 This experience is referred to in Zaragocin et al. 2018.

Although we recognize this technical capacity and efforts to align the indicators needed to monitor the SDGs, we also found that gender equality issues tended to be rather invisible in the National Development Plan and in the report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These findings remind us of the need to give visibility to gender equality within planning agencies and the institutions responsible for monitoring such policies.

The selective process for incorporating the 2030 Agenda in Ecuador demonstrates the urgent need to work on policies that connect gender equality with

environmental sustainability, since they are not taken into consideration at all by the state and scarcely so by women's organizations.

Finally, tensions within civil society due to some organizations being opposed to sexual rights is a matter for consideration and must be studied in greater depth since, although such voices existed in the last century, they were not organized and did not have an agenda to influence public opinion as they do now.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1.

List of interviewees

United Nations officers:

Nidia Pezantes, UN Women

Alison Vásquez, UN Women

Lola Valladares, UNFPA

Government officials:

Álvaro Sáenz, Deputy Minister of Education

Cecilia Falconí, Adviser, Ministry of Public Health

Soledad Puente, Executive Secretary, National Gender Equality Council expert

Paola Mena, National Gender Equality Council

Rocío Rosero, Former Deputy Minister of Economic and Social Inclusion and Coalición Nacional de Mujeres de Ecuador activist

Andrés Mideros, Former National Secretary for Planning and Development

Marisela Rivera, Former International Relations Coordinator, SENPLADES

Liliana Durán, Assemblywoman and Chair of the Workers' Rights Committee

Miriam Alcívar, Former PEVCM officer

Civil society organization members:

Lizi Ernst, Coalición Nacional de Mujeres del Ecuador

Virginia Gómez de la Torre, Frente de Defensa de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos

Magdalena León, gender and economics activist

Verónica Montúfar, gender and employment activist

Ana Vera, Surkuna and Vivas Nos Queremos

Ana Acosta and Verónica Calvopiña, El Churo group

Sisa Contento, Ecuarrunari youth leader

Gabriela Gómez, El Churo and Saraguro women's organization

Elizabeth Vásquez, LGBTQI activist

Diane Rodríguez, LGBTQI activist

ANNEX 2.

List of SDG gender indicators identified by INEC

Indicator	National classification
1.1.1 Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)	Tier I
1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age	Tier I
1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	Tier I
1.4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services	Tier I
3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio	Tier I
3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Tier I
3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations	Tier II
3.3.4 Hepatitis B incidence per 100,000 population	Tier II
3.3.5 Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases	Tier II
3.4.1 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease	Tier I
3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate	Tier I
3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries	Tier I
3.7.1 Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods	Tier II
3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group	Tier I
3.9.3 Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning	Tier II
4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex	Tier III
4.C.1 Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary; (b) primary; (c) lower secondary; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g., pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country	Tier I
5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex	Tier II

5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and age	Tier II
5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence	Tier II
5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18	Tier II
5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location	Tier I
5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments	Tier I
5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions	Tier I
5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care	Tier II
5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education	Tier II
5.A.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure	Tier II
5.A.2 Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control	Tier II
5.B.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex	Tier I
5.C.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment	Tier III
8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex	Tier II
8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities	Tier II
8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Tier I
8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training	Tier I
8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age	Tier I
10.1.1 Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 per cent of the population and the total population	Tier I
10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by age, sex and persons with disabilities	Tier I
11.7.2 Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months	Tier II

16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age	Tier I
16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	Tier I
16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live	Tier II
16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation	Tier I
16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18	Tier I
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Tier I
16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	Tier I
16.B.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law	Tier I
17.8.1 Proportion of individuals using the Internet	Tier I

Source: Valle 2018, pp. 364-379.

Notes:

Tier I: Indicator is available in the national statistics system.

Tier II: Indicator is not produced by the national statistics system, but can be created using information currently available.

Tier III: Indicator that cannot be measured based on the current state of the national statistics system.

ANNEX 3.

Indicators reported by Ecuador in the first Voluntary National Review

Goal	Total no. of indicators	Tier I indicators, national statistics system	Partially reported indicators	Fully reported indicators	Total no. of reported indicators	% of total no. of indicators reported	% of Tier I indicators reported
1	12	6	2	1	3	25%	50%
2	13	4	2	0	2	15%	50%
3	26	9	0	3	3	12%	33%
4 ²¹	11	2	0	0	0	0%	0%
5 ²²	13	4	0	1	1	8%	25%
6	11	2	0	2	2	18%	100%
7	5	3	0	3	3	60%	100%
8	17	9	2	2	4	24%	44%
9 ²³	12	3	0	0	0	0%	0%
10 ²⁴	10	5	0	1	1	10%	20%
11 ²⁵	14	4	1	0	1	7%	25%
12 ²⁶	12	2	0	0	0	0%	0%
13 ²⁷	6	2	0	0	0	0%	0%
14	10	2	1	0	1	10%	50%
15	14	7	1	0	1	7%	14%
16 ²⁸	21	10	0	0	0	0%	0%
17	23	10	0	1	1	4%	10%
Total	230	84	9	14	23	10%	27%
Percentage	100%	35%	4%	6%	10%	10%	27%

21 Other indicators on access to education were reported (5 indicators).

22 Other indicators on the labour market (2 indicators) and violence (2 indicators, one from 2011) were reported.

23 The road network, electronic governance and the quality of airport infrastructure were reported.

24 GINI index and decent work, with disaggregation, were reported.

25 Basic services, the housing deficit and the homicide rate were reported.

26 The environmental footprint was reported.

27 The reduction in the use of pollutants for the ozone layer, the elimination of toxic substances and the treatment of sources of contamination were reported.

28 Efficiency indicators in the judicial system were reported.

ANNEX 4.

Gender indicators reported by Ecuador in the first Voluntary National Review

Goal	Total no. of gender indicators	Tier I gender indicators	Gender indicators reported	% of total no. of gender indicators reported	% of total no. of Tier I indicators reported
1	3	3	0	0%	0%
2	0	0	0	0%	0%
3	5	2	2	40%	100%
4	1	1	0	0%	0%
5	13	4	1	8%	25%
6	0	0	0	0%	0%
7	0	0	0	0%	0%
8	4	3	2	50%	67%
9	0	0	0	0%	0%
10	1	1	0	0%	0%
11	1	0	0	0%	0%
12	0	0	0	0%	0%
13	0	0	0	0%	0%
14	0	0	0	0%	0%
15	0	0	0	0%	0%
16	5	1	0	0%	0%
17	0	0	0	0%	0%
Total	33²⁹	15	5	15%	33%
Percentage	100%	45%	15%	15%	33%

29 INEC has identified 47 indicators that can be disaggregated by sex. However, for 14 of them the United Nations does not include disaggregation. This is why they are not taken into account for the total calculation in this table.

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